A Companion to Boniface

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Edited by

Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove

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Contents

Acknowledgements ix
Abbreviations x
List of Illustrations and Tables xii
Notes on Contributors xiv

Introduction 1
Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove

PART 1
Contexts

1 Boniface: His Life and Work 9
Rudolf Schieffer

2 Boniface's West Saxon Background 27
Barbara Yorke

3 Boniface's Missionary Circles and Networks 46
James T. Palmer

4 Women in the Anglo-Saxon Missionary Circles 68
Felice Lifshitz

PART 2
Written Sources

5 Boniface as Poet and Teacher 99
Emily V. Thornbury

6 The Boniface Correspondence 123
Michel Aaij

7 The First *Life* of Boniface: Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* 152
Shannon Godlove

8 The Later Medieval *Vitae Bonifatii* 174
Shannon Godlove

9 Boniface: Preaching and Penance 201
Rob Meens

10 Boniface and the Reform Councils 219
Michael Glatthaar

PART 3
Spheres of Activity

11 Boniface in Francia 249
Michael Edward Moore

12 Boniface in Hessia and Thuringia 270
John-Henry Clay

13 Boniface in Bavaria 299
Leanne Good

14 Boniface in Frisia 327
Marco Mostert

PART 4
Veneration and Afterlife

15 The Veneration of Boniface in the Middle Ages 357
Petra Kehl

16 *Imitemur nos, qui alumni eius sumus*…: Boniface's *Nachleben* in Early Medieval Fulda 379
Janneke Raaijmakers

17 Boniface as Political Saint in Germany in the 19th and 20th Centuries 404
Siegfried Weichlein

18 Popular Veneration and the Image of Boniface in the Modern Era 428
Michel Aaij

Bibliography 473
Index 535

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We report with sadness that Dr. Rudolf Schieffer passed away in 2018, though not before signing off on the final version of his biographical chapter. Dr. Schieffer was among the first to sign on to this book project, and we are honored to be able to include his work in this volume.

This volume was made possible in part thanks to the generous support of Columbus State University, who provided financial assistance towards the cost of translation of several chapters and the professional production of the index. Thanks also, on behalf of Shannon, to the Main Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, for granting visiting researcher status and borrowing privileges in support of this project over several years, and on behalf of Michel, to the library and especially the Interlibrary Loan office at Auburn University, Montgomery. Michel is also grateful to correspondents around the world, including Madeleine Plum and Elizabeth Ginsberg, the VVV in Dokkum, and the Bonifatiusverein in Paderborn.

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Abbreviations

For full references to texts see the bibliography

Alcuin, *VW*	Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, ed. W. Levison
Altfrid, *VLger*	Altfrid, *Vita Liudgeri*, ed. W. Diekamp
Ann. Mett.	*Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. B. von Simson
Arbeo, VC	*Vita Corbiniani*, eds. H. Glaser et al.
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
AUGRF	*Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Reichsabtei Fulda*
Bede, *HE*	Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, eds. Colgrave and Mynors
BN	*Breves Notitiae*, ed. F. Lošek
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaeualis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CDF	*Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis*, ed. E.F.J. Dronke
CLA	*Codices Latini Antiquiores*, ed. E.A. Lowe
Conversio	*Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
Eigil, *VS*	Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, ed. P. Engelbert
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
Emerton	*Letters of Boniface*, trans. E. Emerton, eds. T. Noble and T. Head
FW	*Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. K. Schmid
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society
Hygeburg, *VWill*	Hygeburg, *Vita Willibaldi*, ed. O. Holder-Egger
Hygeburg, *VWyn*	Hygeburg, *Vita Wynnebaldi*, ed. O. Holder-Egger
Jahn, DB	*Ducatus Baiuvariorum: Das Bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger*
Liudger, *VG*	Liudger, *Vita Gregorii*, ed. W. Levison
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	Auctores antiquissimi
Capit.	Capitularia regum Francorum
Conc.	Concilia
DD Kar.	Diplomatum Karolinorum
DD Mer.	Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica
Epp.	Epistolae (in Quart)
Epp. sel.	Epistolae selectae
Fontes iures	Fontes iures Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi

Libri mem.	Libri memoriales
Libri mem. N.S.	Libri memoriales et necrologia, Nova series
LL	Leges (in Folio)
Necr.	Necrologia Germaniae
Poet. lat.	Poetae Latini medii aevi
SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
SS	Scriptores in folio
MIÖG	*Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforchung*
NA	*Notitia Arnonis*, ed. F. Lošek
Otloh, *VB*	Otloh, *Vita Bonifatii auctore Otloho*, ed. W. Levison
PL	*Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne
QAGADF	Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda
Rau	*Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius; Nebst Einigen Zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, ed. R. Rau
Rudolf, *VL*	Rudolf, *Vita Leobae*, ed. G. Waitz
SC	Sources chrétiennes
Tangl	*Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. M. Tangl
TF	*Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Freising*, ed. T. Bitterauf
TR	*Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Regensburg*, ed. A. Weissthanner
TS	*Die Traditionen des Klosters Schäftlarn*, ed. J. Widemann
UBF	*Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, ed. E.E. Stengel
VaB	*Vita altera Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison
Willibald, *VB*	Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison

Illustrations and Tables

Images

4.1 Crucifixion, frontispiece of the Kitzingen Pauline Epistles. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. f. 69, fol. 7r, 8th century 87

5.1 Figured poem *Versibus en iuuenis*, preface to Boniface's *Ars grammatica.* Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. f. 29, fol. 44r, 9th century 107

10.1 *Decree of Soissons: Sanctio* with mention of the 23 bishops and showing the signa of Pippin and three high-ranking laymen, and rubric of Pippin's oldest royal capitulary. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3827, fol. 39r, 9th century 236

16.1 Frontispiece of volume II of *Codex Eberhardi*. Marburg, Staatsarchiv, Hs. K. 426, vol. II, fol. 6r, ca. 1160s 401

18.1 Mid-19th-century German prayer card, from the Boniface Association 430

18.2 Image of Boniface by Rudolf Offermann, *Dritter Verbandstag der Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: Verbandszentrale des Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands, 1924) 438

18.3 Boniface by Augustin Kolb (1869–1942), reprinted in Dr. Unwander, *Der heilige Bonifatius, Apostel der Deutschen* (Christkönigsverlag vom Weißen Kreuz, Meitingen bei Augsburg, 1962) 439

18.4a German stamp for Fulda's 1200th anniversary, 1944 442

18.4b German stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954 443

18.4c Dutch stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954 444

18.4d Vatican City stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954 445

18.4e German stamp for the 1250th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 2004 445

18.5 Josef Plum, "Sanct Bonifatius unterstützt den Wiederaufbau," German prayer card from the series *Mainzer Heilige vorgestellt in den Werken der Barmherzigkeit* (Mainz: 1949) 446

18.6a Membership card of the Boniface Association, late 1800s 448

18.6b Membership card of the Boniface Association, 1949 449

18.7 Logo of *Bonifatius, Das Musical* (Fulda: 2004) 455

18.8 Scene from the finale of Dutch opera *Bonifatius* (Leeuwarden: 2004) 467

Maps

1.1 General map of places where Boniface was active xviii
12.1 Hessia and Thuringia in the 7th and 8th centuries 274
12.2 Hessia and Thuringia in the 8th century, showing properties obtained by Boniface and Lull 288
13.1 Bavaria in the time of Boniface 304
14.1 Frisia in the time of Boniface 328

Tables

4.1 Manuscripts from the Gun(t)za and Abirhilt groups and others 80
5.1 Boniface's *Enigmata* in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, 735C (*s.* xi), and Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1553 (*s.* ix) 117
5.2 Boniface's *Enigmata* in Einsiedeln, Bibliotheca monasterii, 302 (*s.* x), and Cambridge, University Library, Gg.5.35 (*s.* xi) 118
8.1 Boniface in medieval saints' lives 196

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(1947–2018) was a medieval historian and contributor to and later director of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica. The son of Theodor Schieffer, he received his PhD in 1975 from the University of Bonn, the same year he began working for the MGH. His habilitation in 1979 at the University of Regensburg

was on papal investiture, and in 1980 he became professor of medieval and modern history in Bonn, before going in 1994 to the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, where he led the MGH until 2012. For the MGH, he finished the publication of critical editions of the letters of Archbishop Hincmar of Reims, his *De ordine palatii*, and a volume of Hincmar's writings. He authored many articles and monographs, including *Christianisierung und Reichsbildungen* (2010) and *Die Karolinger* (5th edition, 2014), and was a frequent reviewer for the *Deutsches Archiv*.

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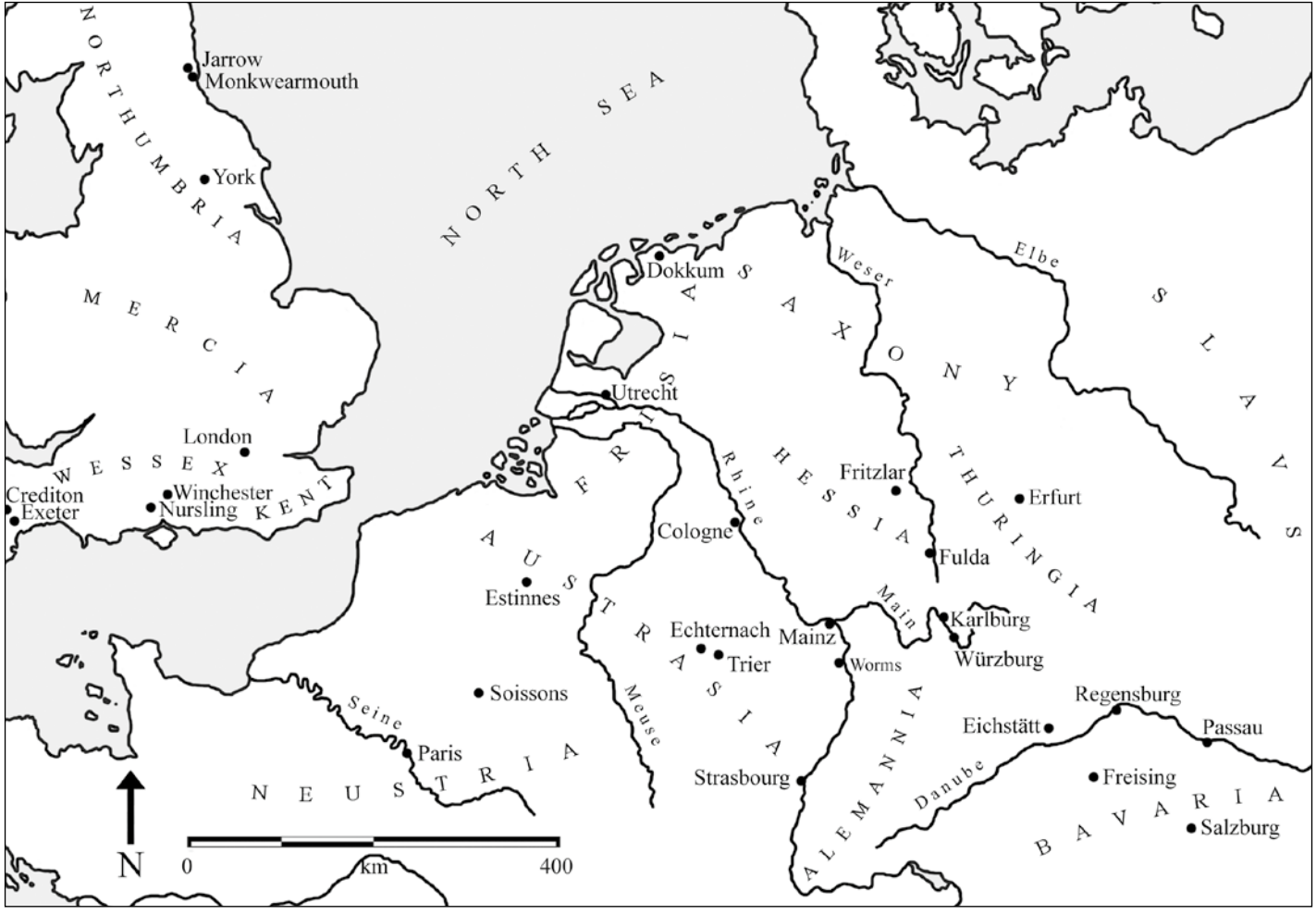

MAP 1.1 General map of places where Boniface was active

Introduction

Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove

The 8th-century English missionary Boniface is one of the most influential and well-attested figures of early medieval Europe. The details of his career on the Continent as a missionary, church reformer, and founder of monastic and episcopal centres have come down to us via an exceptional array of textual sources, including an archive of one hundred and fifty letters. In addition to this extensive correspondence, we have early works of Boniface (then Wynfrith) as a Latin poet and teacher, as well as records of church councils, sermons, and penitentials associated with Boniface's missionary networks. As a saint and a martyr, Boniface was also the subject of several medieval saints' lives that reveal how he was remembered and reinterpreted by the religious communities at Mainz, Fulda, and Utrecht that claimed him as a foundational figure. While a copious scholarly literature on Boniface exists, much of it is available primarily in German collections intended for a specialist audience of medieval historians. This volume for *Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition* series brings together recent critical perspectives from British, North American, German, and Dutch scholarship, with the aim of introducing Boniface to a wider range of English-speaking readers.

The chapters in the first section of the volume, *Part 1: Contexts*, offer historical overviews of Boniface's life and career in England and on the Continent, and situate Boniface in the social networks that influenced his work and continued it after his death. Rudolf Schieffer's brief biography of Boniface in Chapter 1 is an essential starting point for those who wish to know more about the events of Boniface's life and his various roles as missionary, church reformer, and martyr. In Chapter 2, Barbara Yorke details how Boniface's early life on the frontiers of Wessex, whose population had only recently been Christianized and that still functioned as a pioneer society, inspired Wynfrith/Boniface with a missionary impulse. Yorke shows how Boniface's West Saxon background contributed to the development of certain habits of mind, such as a zeal for religious correction, a tendency to seek support from family, and a willingness to entrust women with authoritative roles, that would guide him in his later work.

The significance of kinship ties and the prominence of women in Boniface's missionary circles are explored further in the contributions of James T. Palmer and Felice Lifshitz. Palmer's chapter examines how Boniface's complex social networks, both long-distance and local, shaped and sustained his missionary

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work by providing powerful connections, personnel, material resources, and moral support. Boniface drew on bonds of family obligation as well as Christian fellowship maintained by the exchange of prayer and books, but also actively sought political and papal backing for his endeavours. Hagiographies, too, formed textual networks, transmitting what Palmer calls "Boniface's distinctive vision" via interlinked saints' lives that drew upon one another as sources.

Felice Lifshitz explores the vital intellectual contributions of women, such as Leoba, Thecla, and the nuns of monasteries like Tauberbishofsheim, Kitzingen (both founded by Boniface), and Karlburg in areas of the Main river valley influenced by insular religious culture. Lifshitz focuses on two groupings of 8th-century manuscripts containing biblical, patristic, and apocryphal texts produced by women in the scriptoria of Kitzingen and Karlburg. She argues that the nuns' choice of texts and the artistic renderings in the manuscripts place female figures as central to the conversion process and reveal the existence of a feminist consciousness among monastic women writing, teaching, and preaching in the extended circles of the 8th-century English missions.

The wealth of texts associated with Boniface, many written by the saint himself, form the subject of *Part 2: Written Sources*. Emily V. Thornbury presents a detailed analysis of Boniface's early career as a teacher, grammarian, and writer of intricate Latin verse and *enigmata*. His works display a love of metrical complexity and poetic ingenuity that is at once characteristic of the Aldhelmian literary culture then current in England, and also idiosyncratic, revealing his preoccupations with moral and spiritual instruction and the correction of error wherever it may be found. Crucially, Thornbury demonstrates the continuities between Wynfrith the grammarian and Boniface the missionary, showing how Boniface established a Latinate Christian literary culture on the Continent that was grounded in the study of *grammatica* and provided the men and women of his *familia* with a distinctive intellectual identity that persisted for generations.

Michel Aaij offers a general introduction to the Boniface correspondence, the remarkable collection of one hundred and fifty letters and documents exchanged between Boniface and his associates, who included popes, political figures, and fellow churchmen and women. These letters provide us with our primary source of information about Boniface and his interactions. Aaij gives a detailed discussion of the manuscript transmission of the letters and their modern critical history, outlining how they have been used by historians to construct conflicting images of the saint. Aaij also explores how the exchange of letters, prayers, poems, and gifts facilitated ongoing relationships of friendship and support among Boniface and members of his circle near and far.

In life, Boniface modelled himself upon the saints, especially the apostle Paul. In death, Boniface's self-conscious enactment of the apostolic life was brought to its fullest possible conclusion: his martyrdom guaranteed that he would be remembered by medieval Christians as a saint. Just what kind of saint, however, would depend upon time, place, medium, and circumstances. Shannon Godlove's contributions to this volume focus on the representation of Boniface in medieval hagiography. The six saints' lives written about Boniface offer insights into how his life and work were interpreted and remembered in the communities associated with him between the late 8th and mid-11th centuries. The first and most important of these is Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, written shortly after Boniface's death. Formative for the cult and all other *vitae*, it is punctuated by Pauline citations at the ends of each chapter, possibly to enable reading it aloud in the liturgical celebration of his feast day. Willibald's *vita* served to establish Boniface as fulfilling the type of Paul and to bring his historical presence into the eternal company of apostles. Godlove's second contribution is a comparative literary study of the five later *vitae* showing how different hagiographers and communities shaped and reshaped the saintly image elaborated by Willibald for their own ends, and contributed to the historical development of a *Bonifatiusbild*.

Preaching, hearing confession, and assigning penance were certainly among the duties which Boniface performed as a priest and bishop, yet little evidence of his involvement in these activities remains. In his chapter on preaching and penance, Rob Meens examines a collection of sermons formerly attributed to Boniface and an 8th-century penitential known as the *Excarpsus Cummeani* which reflects many of the concerns addressed the letters of Boniface and his associates and in the reform councils. While these sources cannot be linked directly to Boniface, they provide further insight into the practicalities of conversion and everyday religious practice in his sphere of influence during his lifetime.

The decrees of church councils and general assemblies initiated by Boniface as he worked to reform the Frankish church comprise the subject of Michael Glatthaar's contribution. The success of these reforms required support and cooperation from Frankish elites, especially Carloman and Pippin III, bringing Boniface into the inner circle of Carolingian politics. The codification of these reforms as decrees ensured that they would continue to influence the development of the Carolingian legal system and canon law through the reign of Charlemagne and beyond.

The territorial expanse of Boniface's activities on the Continent was vast, encompassing several ethnically distinct regions and political entities, reaching from the northernmost coasts and marshes of Frisia to the heartlands of

Bavaria, and from the wooded frontier between the Hessians and Saxons to the palaces, monasteries, and towns of Francia. Each of these regions posed its own particular challenges, and Boniface's impacts on the church history, people, and landscapes of each varied greatly, depending upon the nature of his work there and the realities which he encountered. Recent scholarship has begun to appreciate how much the work of Boniface and his colleagues was contingent upon the unique religious and cultural situations in each of these regions and among each of these peoples. The four chapters in *Part 3: Spheres of Activity* reflect these new trends in historiography.

The period of Boniface's involvement in Francia was a time of political upheaval as the old Merovingian age gave way to a new Carolingian order. Michael E. Moore's chapter looks at how Boniface navigated his relationships with Frankish leaders and elites as he sought support for his missionary and reform work during this turbulent era. Boniface's involvement with Charles Martel and his sons Carloman and Pippin III not only led to the momentous ecclesiastical reforms outlined in Michael Glatthaar's chapter, they also helped reorient the Frankish church and kingdom towards Rome and the papacy in ways that had profound consequences for the future of Europe.

Boniface's work in Hessia and neighbouring Thuringia forms the subject of John-Henry Clay's contribution. Clay outlines how Hessia and Thuringia differed from one another in terms of degree of previous Christianization and the extent of Frankish influence in each region, and shows how these factors affected the nature of Boniface's work and the impact he was able to have on the people and religious landscape in each place. Boniface had hoped Hessia would eventually serve as a gateway to future missionary forays into the domain of the pagan Saxons. While Boniface's goal of converting the Saxons went unfulfilled during his lifetime, Hessia and Thuringia became the main centres of Boniface's missionary activities and church organization. It was in Hessia and Thuringia that Boniface established his most enduring monastic foundations, including Fulda, which would later become instrumental in the forceful conversion of the Saxons by Charlemagne.

The political environment in the independent duchy of Bavaria differed greatly from that of other regions where Boniface had been active. Leanne Good's contribution discusses how Boniface navigated the often difficult terrain of Carolingian, papal, and local (ducal and episcopal) interests as he sought to reform the Bavarian and Austrasian churches and establish the monasteries of Eichstätt and Heidenheim. While his endeavours in Bavaria met with limited success, he indirectly influenced the religious landscape there since the ideas Boniface promoted in his reform councils were imposed upon the region by Charlemagne when he deposed the Bavarian duke in 788. Good

also explores how later hagiographers such as Arbeo of Friesing deliberately responded to and corrected pro-Carolingian misrepresentations of Bavaria, an area often depicted as pagan and lacking any prior ecclesiastical organization, by downplaying Boniface's role and extolling native saints and churchmen from the Irish tradition as the supposed true founders of the Bavarian church.

Marco Mostert's chapter draws on both written sources and material evidence to provide an overview of the landscape, culture, and political situation Boniface would have found in Frisia when he first arrived there in 716 and 719 and returned to one final time in 753–754. Mostert situates Boniface's work in Frisia in the context of Willibrord's mission at Utrecht and his at times fraught relationship with his English compatriot, for it was at Utrecht under Willibrord's tutelage between 719 and 721, Mostert suggests, that Boniface learned how to be a successful missionary. But it was the later event of Boniface's murder by pagans at Dokkum that formed a pivotal moment in the history of the Frisian church. The cult of Boniface in Dokkum was constant but minor; Utrecht's richer missionary history, its later rewriting of that history, and its association with Willibrord as well as with Boniface's martyrdom helped it become a centre for missionary activity and ecclesiastical organisation for Frisia.

The chapters in *Part 4: Veneration and Afterlife* trace the development of Boniface as a saint and sometimes controversial historical and political figure from the time of his death to the present day. The medieval veneration of Boniface is the subject of Petra Kehl's chapter, which surveys the material, religious, and sociological aspects of his cult at Fulda, Mainz, Dokkum, and Utrecht. Kehl also investigates the situation in England, where a strong popular cult was never established in any locale, but where Boniface continued to be commemorated by the clergy until the time of the Norman Conquest.

Fulda, Boniface's most beloved monastic foundation and the site of his grave, is such an important centre of his veneration that it warrants a separate chapter. Janneke Raaijmakers addresses this topic from historical, liturgical, and geographical perspectives, focusing on how the community at Fulda in the Middle Ages imagined Boniface as they made him into their patron saint. Comparing the development of Boniface's legacy at Fulda with that of the monastery's other founder, Sturm, Raaijmakers shows how Boniface himself came to represent Fulda as an institution in matters spiritual and mundane.

Siegfried Weichlein's contribution outlines the many ways in which 19th- and 20th-century Germans interpreted and portrayed Boniface during two tumultuous centuries of change. Every era recasts Boniface in its own image; in the post-Napoleonic era, he became a figure who explicitly competed with Martin Luther. Boniface and Luther exemplified the two German churches as they shifted position, from believing in a Germany whose two churches were

part of one single nation-state to fighting over whose ancestry and legacy laid a valid claim to being called "German." Weichlein traces the evolution of Boniface from the Enlightenment to the Cold War, showing how conflicting images of the saint were used polemically by both Catholics and Protestants.

The popular perceptions and representations of Boniface in Germany, the Netherlands, and England in the modern and postmodern periods form the subject of Michel Aaij's chapter in this section. During this time of increasing secularization and diminishing influence of saints' cults, Boniface shows that a saint with such a broad sphere of influence can take on new roles – for instance, Boniface comes to be hailed after the Second World War as a kind of proto-European. Aaij traces the ways in which Boniface has become part of the tourism industry in localities historically associated with him. His representation in mass-produced religious paraphernalia, tourist trinkets, and recent plays and operas in some ways strengthens the memory of the saint even as it commodifies devotion or calls it into question. The postmodern period has seen scholarly and popular critiques of Boniface from ecological and postcolonial perspectives, and an undercurrent of anti-Christian sentiment can be seen in some popular representations of Boniface, especially in the Netherlands.

The contributions in this volume provide a guide to past and current research, but they also orient readers towards future ways of studying Boniface and the 8th-century English missions to the Continent. Two areas of influence that remain to be explored, for example, are Boniface's importance to American Catholicism in the mid- to late 19th century, and the ways in which Boniface was invoked by 19th-and 20th-century German and British missionaries in Africa to justify a violent colonialism. Much work also remains to be done in terms of updating editions of the Bonifatian correspondence and translating the substantial corpus of medieval Latin saints' lives. The archive of texts and materials associated with Boniface, the insular missionaries on the Continent, and their successors is deep, and contains much material not yet widely accessible. Indeed, the more literary dimensions of Boniface's writing and that of his students and associates have only just begun to be researched and appreciated. We hope the chapters in this volume provide a thorough orientation to the field and an invitation to extend understanding of Boniface in new directions.

PART 1

Contexts

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CHAPTER 1

Boniface: His Life and Work

Rudolf Schieffer

1 Introduction

The West Saxon monk Wynfrith (ca. 675–754), better known by the name Boniface, has left us with an image of himself more vivid than that of any of his contemporaries. Unlike many of his contemporaries, such as Willibrord (d. 739) and Pirmin (d. 753) who left behind no written sources, we have around 100 official and personal letters written by Boniface and people associated with him. These letters were collected and circulated by Lull, Boniface's pupil and successor in Mainz.[1] They allow us some direct insight into his thoughts and deeds. They are given a historical context by a *vita*, a saintly biography composed in Mainz around 760 by the English priest Willibald (d. after 768) under Lull's supervision, the first of four such biographies.[2] This text is supplemented by other valuable *vitae* written about Boniface's companions and pupils which draw upon one another as sources.[3] It becomes apparent just how decisively our image of Boniface is shaped by *vitae*, letters, and other documents from the Insular missionary milieu when we recall that Boniface is not mentioned at all in the main Frankish source for the period, the *Historia vel Gesta Francorum* (Continuation of Fredegar),[4] and is mentioned only once in the Roman *Liber Pontificalis*.[5]

1 Michael Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (Berlin: 1916), MGH Epp. 1.

2 Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57, *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini* (Hanover: 1905), 1–58. C.H. Talbot (ed. and trans.), *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (New York: 1954), 24.

3 For a discussion of these *vitae*, see Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil III: Karolingische Biographie 750–920* (Stuttgart: 1991), 6–64; and Lutz E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger* (Mainz: 1997).

4 Roger Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken* (Hanover: 2007).

5 Louis Marie Olivier Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1886), 397.

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2 Origins and Career

Wynfrith must have been born between 672 and 675 in the vicinity of Exeter, then part of the kingdom of Wessex. Crediton in Devon could conceivably be the place of his birth, but the documentary evidence is poor, and the earliest mention of this possibility is only from the 14th century.[6] What is certain is that Wynfrith came from a land-owning family with several sons and was given as a child to the monastery in Exeter to be inducted into monastic life. After some years he moved to the large abbey of Nursling near Winchester, where he internalized the early medieval English tradition of theological and literary education and was moulded spiritually by the ethos of a church closely tied to Rome. He was ordained a priest between 702 and 705 at the earliest. Within the monastery he quickly advanced to the position of teacher, composing textbooks on Latin grammar and metrics that followed the late-classical model, as well as shorter poetic works in the style of Aldhelm of Malmesbury (d. 709).[7] He emerged as a forceful preacher and also began to make a name for himself in church politics when in 705 King Ine of Wessex (d. after 726) brought him in to mediate – successfully – with Archbishop Berhtwald of Canterbury (d. 731) in a dispute about the division of the diocese of Winchester. As his biographer Willibald attests,[8] from then on Wynfrith was enlisted at synods on numerous occasions, although no details of these activities are known.

We do not know precisely what prompted Wynfrith, then well past forty, to give up his respectable existence in Nursling in order to spread the Christian faith in Germania, across the English Channel. His letters and earliest *vita* suggest that he was animated by the religious ideal of *peregrinatio*, which was the conscious abandonment of one's safe and shielding home for the sake of the Lord. This ideal had been followed by many before him such as the Irish *peregrini* Columbanus (d. 615) and Gallus (d. *c.*650), and Northumbrians such as Wilfrid (d. 709) and Willibrord (d. 739), who founded monasteries and missionized in Francia and Frisia.[9] Nevertheless, what exactly prompted him to

6 Nicolas Orme, "The Church of Crediton from Saint Boniface to the Reformation," in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton,* ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 95–131.

7 Boniface's grammatical and poetic works are edited in George John Gebauer and Bengt Löfstedt (eds.), *Bonifatii* (*Vynfreth*) *Ars Grammatica*, CCSL 133B (Turnholt: 1980) and Ernst Dümmler (ed.), MGH Poetae I (Berlin: 1881), 1–23.

8 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 13–14.

9 Tangl, no. 14, 24; Willibald, *VB*, c. 1, 7. See Arnold Angenendt, "Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800," in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter I*, ed. Heinz Löwe (Stuttgart: 1982), 52–79; Heinz Löwe, "Westliche Peregrinatio

leave for the Continent in spring 716 remains a mystery. In Frisia he encountered an extremely difficult situation: in the crisis that shook the Frankish realm following the death of the mayor of the palace Pippin (d. 714),[10] Radbod (d. 719), the heathen *dux* (or, according to English sources, king) of the Frisians, had shaken off Carolingian overlordship. In so doing, he had also dealt a heavy blow to the Frisian Church that had been established by Wynfrith's older countryman Willibrord and had its centre in Utrecht.[11] The attempt to persuade Radbod to convert through powerful, pointed preaching[12] was doomed to failure from the start, and Wynfrith returned home the same year a disappointed man, albeit one enriched by the knowledge that without political backing no missionary endeavour could be expected to succeed.

In Nursling he was received with open arms and in the following year was even elected abbot, yet he did not allow himself to be deflected from his great enterprise and waited only for a favourable opportunity to renew his activity on the Continent. This time, though, he was better prepared. In autumn 718 he was ready: after Bishop Daniel of Winchester (d. 745) had relieved him of the office of abbot and provided him with a general letter of introduction,[13] he left his English home. Even though he was never to return, throughout his life he retained strong emotional ties to the land of his youth. This is demonstrated by a number of things: first, his correspondence, in which he continually exchanged ideas with clerics, nuns, and kings on the island;[14] second, the fact that he was repeatedly able to request books from there; third, and above all, the impressive number of supporters he won from the island, men and women who helped him to establish the church in Germania and in whom he placed

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und Mission: Ihr Zusammenhang mit den länder- und völkerkundlichen Kenntnissen des früheren Mittelalters," *Popoli e paesi nella cultura altomedievale* 29 (Spoleto: 1983), 327–72; Alexander O'Hara, "*Patria*, *peregrinatio*, and *paenitentia*: Identities of Alienation in the Seventh Century," in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West,* eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: 2013), 89–124.

10 Josef Semmler, "Zur pippinidisch-karolingischen Sukzessionskrise 714–723," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 33 (1977), 1–36.

11 Wolfgang H. Fritze, "Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Bistums Utrecht. Franken und Friesen 690–734," *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 35 (1971), 130–39; Josef Semmler, "Die Friesenmission und der Eintritt der in der alten Provincia Germania II gelegenen Bistümer in die karolingische Reichskirche," *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 212 (2009), 1–43.

12 Willibald, *VB,* c.4, 16–17.

13 Tangl, no. 11.

14 For examples of these exchanges, see Tangl, nos. 15, 23, 27, 29–36, 38, 39, 46, 47, 63–67, 69, 73–76, 78, 81, 91, 94, 105.

particular trust.[15] In his dealings with the Franks who dominated the Continent, communication and language were apparently unproblematic,[16] but he did like to emphasize cultural idiosyncrasies, as expressed, for example, in the divergent Insular script of the manuscripts copied in his monasteries.[17]

3 The Missionary

Wynfrith laid solid foundations for his new venture by first making his way to Rome with several companions. There he visited the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul,[18] as did many pilgrims from England since the Christian message had reached the southern shores of their island on the initiative of Gregory the Great (d. 604).[19] Now, conversely, it was an Englishman who drew the attention of Pope Gregory II (d. 731) to the lands north of the Alps. After a stay of several months Wynfrith was granted the papal mandate he requested in a document dated 15 May 719;[20] it addressed him, for the first time, by his new name, Boniface, the saint for the previous day in the Roman calendar. This signified his acceptance into the community of the Roman Church. His mandate specified that he was to lead heathens, wherever they might be found, to the true faith, always observing Rome's instructions in the process and consulting the Apostolic See in case of obstacles. It was an instruction Boniface took to heart.

It is open to doubt whether Boniface was aware of all the obstacles in the way of Christianizing what Willibald called the "wild tribes of Germania."[21] Conditions differed enormously from region to region. The Saxons in the north (as far as the fringes of the German Central Uplands, or *Mittelgebirge*)[22] remained stubbornly heathen and had inflicted a bloody death on individual Christian

15 Rosamond McKitterick, "Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections and Local Influences," *Vaughan Paper* 36 (1991), 1–40.

16 Michel Banniard, "Credo et langage: Les missions de saint Boniface," in *Voyages et voyageurs à Byzance et en Occident du VIe au XIe siècle*, eds. Alain Dierkens and Jean-Marie Sansterre (Geneva: 2000), 165–87.

17 Rosamond McKitterick, "Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1989), 291–329.

18 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 20–21.

19 Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: 1946), 36–44.

20 Tangl, no. 12.

21 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 22.

22 Beda, *HE*, I, c. 15, 50: According to Bede (d. 735), these Saxons were the closest relatives of the Anglo-Saxons who had once migrated to Britain.

missionaries who had entered their territories.[23] Central and southern Germany, on the other hand, had belonged to the Frankish realm of the baptized Merovingians since the 6th century and were subject to Christian princes who ultimately set greater store by their political independence than by rigorous Christianization.[24] Only in Alamannia, to which Boniface paid very little attention, did a diocesan structure already exist,[25] something present only in the planning stages in Bavaria.[26] Main-Franconia and Hessia were experiencing a constant influx of baptized Franks from the other side of the Rhine who were intent on dominating the resident heathen population but less concerned with their conversion. Frankish influence was weaker in Thuringia, where, after the duchy had ceased to exist, local nobles had divided power amongst themselves and Christianity was evident only in a few isolated places.[27]

The challenge Boniface set himself did not actually consist in convincing mere individuals of certain religious tenets; its aim was a fundamental change in the world view of major social groups. These social groups forged their distinctive identities through their own particular gods and the communal worship of these deities. To understand the Christian God as superior, even as the sole God for all peoples, and to submit themselves to Him through the visible ceremony of baptism, was to shatter the traditional foundations of communal life. Such a shift was only – if at all – conceivable as a collective change in attitude, one which originated from the elites and always had to reckon with resistance and stalling tactics. For Boniface, as for other missionaries of the period, it was therefore natural to approach the powerful and enlist them in

23 Knut Schäferdiek, "Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172–95; Heiko Steuer, "Archäologische Quellen zu Religion und Kult der Sachsen vor und während der Christianisierung," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 83–110.

24 Rainer Butzen, *Die Merowinger östlich des mittleren Rheins: Studien zur militärischen, politischen, rechtlichen, religiösen, kirchlichen, kulturellen Erfassung durch Königtum und Adel im 6. sowie 7. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: 1987), *passim*.

25 Walter Berschin, Dieter Geuenich, and Heiko Steuer (eds.), *Mission und Christianisierung am Hoch- und Oberrhein (6.-8. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart: 2000), *passim*.

26 Roman Deutinger, "Wie die Baiern Christen wurden," in *Die Anfänge Bayerns: Von Raetien und Noricum zur frühmittelalterlichen Baiovaria*, eds. Hubert Fehr and Irmtraut Heitmeier (St. Ottilien: 2012), 613–32.

27 Matthias Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen," in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter I*, ed. Heinz Löwe (Stuttgart: 1982), 239–318; Karl Heinemeyer, "Die Missionierung Hessens," in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst*, eds. Helmut Roth and Egon Wamers (Sigmaringen: 1984), 47–54; Hubert Mordek, "Die Hedenen als politische Kraft im austrasischen Frankenreich," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, eds. Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn, and Michael Richter (Sigmaringen: 1994), 345–66.

addressing a wider audience and thereby effect rapid mass baptisms. Concrete instruction in the beliefs, laws, and morality of the Church and rehearsal of the actual practices of divine worship were secondary tasks which demanded long-term persistence and were left for the future.[28]

Leaving Rome, Boniface went first to Thuringia, perhaps with the intention of pushing forward into Saxony (a goal that was to elude him his entire life). There the combination of persistent paganism and the precarious position of the Church led to some troubling experiences. These prompted him to direct words of warning to the local lords and, not least, to the priests who had arrived in the land but lacked episcopal supervision and whose way of life caused him to remonstrate fiercely with them.[29] Nevertheless, he was soon forced to realize that he, a mere priest, was hardly in a position to rectify anything. So, for the time being, he turned his back on Thuringia and in 719 continued on to Frisia, where after the death of Prince Radbod the prospects had become more promising than during his first visit, since the Franks were once again gaining the upper hand.[30] There he became an ally of Willibrord, Archbishop of the Frisians since 695, and for the first time Boniface experienced rapid success as a missionary, as reflected in his correspondence with his English friends and colleagues back home.[31] However, when the aged Willibrord offered him ordination as a bishop (and probably the sure prospect of succeeding him as archbishop) Boniface preferred to go his own way and left Frisia in 721.[32]

The new mayor of the palace, Charles Martel (d. 741), may have played a formative role in this decision. Following his triumph in the internal Frankish battle for power, Charles Martel could be expected to employ imperial power to intervene energetically on the fringes of his realm, east of the Rhine. In any event, Boniface arrived in Hessia at exactly the right moment and soon enjoyed considerable success in baptizing converts in the Lahngau, establishing a small monastery at Amöneburg, a Frankish fortress not far from modern Marburg. Amöneburg was meant to provide stability for his pursuit of the

28 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995), 164–75; Arnold Angenendt, "Mission im Frühmittelalter: Die religiösen und sozialgeschichtlichen Rahmenbedingungen," *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 88 (2004), 99–122; Lutz E. von Padberg, "Grundzüge der Missionstheologie des Bonifatius," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 161–91.

29 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 23.

30 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 24.

31 Tangl, no. 14, 15.

32 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 24.

monastic life.[33] Seeking to expand his room to manoeuver, Boniface soon sent the pope a report and had himself invited to Rome by Gregory II; there he was ordained bishop (without a fixed official see) on 30 November 722.[34] The oath he swore on this occasion includes, alongside a profession of the true faith, the somewhat unusual commitment not to seek any community with "any bishops who are opponents of the ancient institutions of the holy Fathers."[35] Judging by this commitment, Boniface already foresaw conflict with elements in the Frankish episcopacy, and would have been all the more grateful for the letters of introduction addressed to the whole of Christendom, to five named Thuringian leaders, and to Charles Martel that the Pope had given him for his return journey.[36] The new bishop immediately turned to Charles, the *de facto* power in the Frankish realm, and obtained a letter of safe conduct[37] intended to safeguard him from acts of hostility. The accelerated expansion of the Church in Hessia and Thuringia was in complete accordance with the political aims of the mayor of the palace.

Boniface's ordination enabled him to obtain priests as helpers, which allowed him to redouble his efforts in Hessia and from 725 onwards in Thuringia, where he established a monastery in Ohrdruf.[38] His biographer Willibald illustrates the lengths to which Boniface went to win over the heathens, describing an episode which has since become famous: the demonstrative felling of an oak tree sacred to the god Donar (Jupiter) near Geismar in Hessia.[39] Boniface is said to have wielded the axe – its blows intended to demonstrate the impotence of the traditional ancestral gods – in the presence of a large, indignant crowd of people in close proximity to the Büraburg, an ancient settlement which had been fortified by the Franks as an important hill castle. All this shows that Boniface's performance had been previously announced and carefully planned so as to entail little personal risk to him.[40]

The logic behind this calculated sacrilege triumphed: the onlookers are reported to have converted to the religion of the more powerful Christian God.

33 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 26.

34 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 29.

35 Tangl, no. 16, 29: "…antestites contra instituta antiqua sanctorum patrum conversari."

36 Tangl, nos. 17, 19, 20.

37 Tangl, no. 22.

38 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33.

39 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 31. On the location see Jürgen Udolph and Rolf Gensen, "Geismar," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 10 (Berlin, New York: 1998), 584–89.

40 Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954, repr. Darmstadt: 1972), 148; Lutz E. von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: 2003), 250.

The wood obtained from felling the oak was used to build a church dedicated to Saint Peter which marked the beginnings of the later monastery of Fritzlar.[41] Apart from such spectacular highpoints, the tedious day-to-day existence of the missionary can be sensed in the news and information gleaned from Rome by Boniface's concerned enquiries.[42] In these letters he talked about people who did not know whether or not they had been baptized, and about people who had been baptized by supposed priests who themselves sacrificed to Donar and ate the sacrificial meat. Others had been baptized by "adulterous" priests without being asked for their profession of faith or wanted to know whether they were permitted to eat sacrificial meat if it had previously been "purified," as it were, by the sign of the Cross. Even the doctrine on marriage propounded by Boniface raised all sorts of questions which shed a lurid light on the social dimensions of Christianization.[43]

4 The Organizer

With every year that the mission in Hessia and Thuringia made further progress, the question of how this uncharted ecclesiastical territory would be permanently organized became more urgent for Boniface. As early as 724 he had complained to the pope about an unnamed bishop (almost certainly Gerold of Mainz) who had neglected to proclaim the word of God among the population of Hessia but who now claimed the region as his diocese.[44] Gregory II's instructions to turn not to the bishop responsible but to the mayor of the palace, Charles Martel, make it very clear that questions concerning the organization of the Church were political in nature and could not be decided by the clergy alone. The ideal envisaged by Boniface – one which was familiar from his English homeland – was an organization of the church into metropolitan districts as decreed by Rome: this provided for two archbishops (in London or Canterbury, and in York) and various (suffragan) bishops assigned to the former's ecclesiastical provinces.[45] A move in this direction is confirmed by a document from 732 in which the new Pope, Gregory III, bestowed on Boniface the rank of

41 Michael Gockel, "Fritzlar," in *Die deutschen Königspfalzen 1: Hessen* (Göttingen: 1996/2001), 491, 500.

42 Tangl, no. 26, 28.

43 Gerald Krutzler, *Kult und Tabu: Wahrnehmungen der Germania bei Bonifatius* (Münster: 2011), *passim*.

44 Tangl, no. 24, 42.

45 Daniel Carlo Pangerl, *Die Metropolitanverfassung des karolingischen Frankenreiches* (Hanover: 2011), 15.

archbishop and the *pallium* as its external symbol. This gave Boniface the full authority to appoint bishops according to the norms of canon law "wherever the multitude of the faithful has become very great."[46] Gregory III pointed out that care had to be taken when organizing new dioceses to find significant locations (namely, cities) worthy of a bishop's prestige; this statement suggests that he had little knowledge of the actual circumstances prevailing in Germania.

The following years failed to see the establishment of the dioceses planned by Boniface; this was due less to a lack of suitable locations for an episcopal church than to tangible resistance on the part of the Franks.[47] The early medieval English model of church organization pushed forward by Boniface was bound to provoke instinctive unease among the established bishops across the Rhine as well as among Frankish aristocratic circles. Although this model had once been practiced in Gaul, it had since been thoroughly discarded during the Merovingian period. As Boniface wrote to the pope somewhat later, the Franks "have not held a council for more than eighty years, nor have they had an archbishop or established or renewed anywhere the canon law of the Church."[48] For many years after his victory over the Arabs in 732, Charles Martel was occupied with the subjugation of southern Gaul and appears to have dreaded the conflicts which would inevitably arise if he promoted any of Boniface's plans that went beyond basic missionary activity; he thus remained passive. However, without formal approval from the mayor of the palace and, above all, without his provision of the necessary materials and furnishings, new bishops' residences were simply inconceivable.[49] For this reason Boniface began to look around for other spheres of activity. He headed to Bavaria at the invitation of Duke Hugbert (d. 736),[50] even before Charles Martel's great military campaign against the Saxons in 738 briefly aroused hope that he would be able to proclaim the Christian message in Saxony.[51] During his sermons and church visitations in Bavaria, Boniface experienced a land that was, in principle,

46 Tangl, no. 28, 50.

47 Josef Semmler, "Bonifatius, die Karolinger und 'die Franken,'" in *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft 750–1000*, eds. Dieter R. Bauer, Rudolf Hiestand, Brigitte Kasten, and Sönke Lorenz (Sigmaringen: 1998), 5–9.

48 Tangl, no. 50, 82.

49 Rudolf Schieffer, "Über Bischofssitz und Fiskalgut im 8. Jahrhundert," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 95 (1975), 18–32.

50 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 35–36. See also Jörg Jarnut, "Bonifatius und Bayern," in *Der weite Blick des Historikers: Einsichten in Kultur-, Landes- und Stadtgeschichte. Peter Johanek zum 65. Geburtstag,* eds. Wilfried Ehbrecht, Angelika Lampen, Franz-Joseph Post, and Mechthild Siekmann (Cologne: 2002), 269–81.

51 Tangl, no. 46.

Christianized and home to individual bishops, whether linked to monasteries or peripatetic, even if Bavaria itself lacked a fixed diocesan structure.

When the next duke, Odilo, wished to rectify this situation, Boniface was immediately consulted. He took the plan with him on his third trip to Rome, where between 737 and 738 he spent almost a year enjoying the high esteem with which he was regarded.[52] Gregory III was prepared to give him every possible support; he gave him the status of "German legate of the Church Universal,"[53] and addressed emphatic letters to "all our beloved bishops, reverend priests, and holy abbots of every land,"[54] especially to the Saxon nation,[55] to the leading figures in Hessia and Thuringia,[56] and to the bishops in Bavaria and "Alamannia,"[57] always exhorting them to follow Boniface's instructions for the eradication of paganism and correction of uncanonical abuses in their churches. The pope even granted Boniface himself the right to choose his own successor.[58] The envisaged reorganization of the Church in Bavaria must also have met with papal approval, since in a letter written a good year later Gregory responded gratefully to a report from Boniface that he had met the Bavarians "not living in accordance with the prescriptions of the Church" and could only recognize Vivilo in Passau as a legitimate bishop, since Vivilo had earlier been ordained by the pope. In addition, Boniface appointed three more bishops on his own initiative and thereby divided the land into four clearly defined dioceses; these can be identified from other sources as Regensburg, Freising, Salzburg, and Passau itself.[59] This decision, taken in 739, was obviously linked to Duke Theodo's (d. 717/18) plan for a diocese (which was a good twenty years older), albeit with the provision that none of the new spiritual leaders was to be raised to the rank of archbishop with precedence over the others. Rather, Boniface himself, if anyone, was to be regarded as their joint metropolitan.[60]

52 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7, 36–37. See Matthias Becher, "Eine Reise nach Rom, ein Hilferuf und ein Reich ohne König: Bonifatius in den letzten Jahren Karl Martells," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 231–53.

53 Tangl, no. 46, 74.

54 Tangl, no. 42.

55 Tangl, no. 21.

56 Tangl, no. 43.

57 Tangl, no. 44.

58 Tangl, no. 50, 83.

59 Tangl, no. 45; Willibald, *VB*, c. 7, 37–39.

60 Stephan Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern zu den Karolingern: Bayerns Bischöfe zwischen Kirchenorganisation, Reichsintegration und Karolingischer Reform (700–847)* (Munich: 2004), 24–68.

In the new Bavarian bishops Boniface also found the necessary co-consecrators for the ordination of future bishops, including his fellow countrymen Burchard and Witta. These he certainly ordained during Charles Martel's lifetime,[61] before the widely travelled West Saxon Willibald, who had come from Rome and Monte Cassino, was also ordained in Sülzenbrücken in Thuringia on 22 October 741.[62] Willibald's ordination was followed by those of the native-born Dadanus and Eddanus. These men are subsequently all named, in this order, as attending the Concilium Germanicum as bishops.[63] Lengthy scholarly enquiry has finally clarified two issues: this gathering actually presupposed ordained bishops, but not necessarily already established dioceses; we can therefore retain the traditional date of the Concilium, namely 21 April 742.[64] The papal letters of confirmation dated 1 April 743[65] resulted in particular episcopal sees being assigned to the new bishops: Würzburg to Burchard and Büraburg to Witta, as well as Erfurt to an unnamed person. However, this does not appear to have happened until later, whereas Willibald resumed residence in his monastery of Eichstätt,[66] which only developed into an official episcopal see over the course of some years.[67] If we include the Frisian diocese of Utrecht, placed under Boniface's supervision after the death in 739 of its founder Willibrord,[68] we may, towards the mid-740s, discern the outlines of a broad area stretching from the North Sea to Bavaria in which Boniface

61 Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: 2004), 193–99.

62 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5, 105. See Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 171.

63 Tangl, no. 56, 99; A. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2/1 (Berlin: 1908), 2.

64 Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 201–16. For a late dating to 743 see Theodor Schieffer, "Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur: Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 20 (1951), 1431–539, and *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 303–04; for an opposing view, see Heinz Löwe, "Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern," *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1955), 110–20. See also Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, "Die Gründungszeit der mitteldeutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum," in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger II*, ed. Helmut Beumann (Cologne: 1974), 71–136; Helmut Michels, "Das Gründungsjahr der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 39 (1987), 11–42; and Franz Staab, "Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der fränkischen und päpstlichen Politik," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 40 (1988), 13–41.

65 Tangl, nos. 51–53.

66 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 44.

67 Stefan Weinfurter, "Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs: Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 50 (1987), 3–40.

68 Tangl, no. 109, 235.

realized his own concept of church organization. Not everything was to endure, for even in Boniface's own lifetime the exposed episcopal seats of Erfurt and Büraburg were probably allowed to lapse after the deaths of their first incumbents and their dioceses incorporated into the growing bishopric of Mainz.[69]

Apart from the establishment of episcopal sees, a matter equally dear to Boniface's heart was the development of a monastic landscape to the east of the Rhine. After the early foundations and expansion of Amöneburg (721–22), Fritzlar (723), and Ohrdruf (725), several convents appeared in the Main region from the 730s onwards, sustained by English nuns. However, apart from Kitzingen, these seem not to have survived for long. Boniface was only indirectly involved in the early days of Hersfeld, where his Bavarian disciple Sturm took up residence as a hermit[70] and where Lull, his successor in Mainz, did not establish a proper abbey until 770. Similarly, he had little to do with Eichstätt, where his fellow countryman Willibald had presided over a monastic community since 740. However, the foundation of a monastery on land by the river Fulda was entirely Boniface's own project.[71] There, at the heart of the area that had witnessed his own missionary activity, Boniface proposed to spend his last years and ultimately to be buried. After lengthy preparations, 12 March 744 saw the solemn beginnings of monastic life under the leadership of Sturm, who had come from Hersfeld.[72] From its inception the monastery was greatly influenced by the Rule of Saint Benedict, which Sturm himself had studied at Rome and Monte Cassino in 747–748.[73] In 751 Boniface, as founder and owner of Fulda, obtained a papal privilege which placed the monastery under the direct jurisdiction of the Apostolic See and excluded every other authority.[74] With this step, Boniface intended to secure the survival and autonomy of this

69 Wolfgang Fritze, "Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung Hessens und Thüringens in die Mainzer Diözese," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 4 (1954), 37–63.

70 Eigil, *VS*, c. 11, 142. See Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, "Zu schriftlichen Zeugnissen für die Anfänge der Reichsabtei Hersfeld," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 107 (1971), 94–135.

71 The land for this monastery at Fulda was bequeathed to Boniface by the mayor of the palace, Carloman.

72 Eigil, *VS*, c. 13, 144. See Karl Heinemeyer, "Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 30 (1980), 1–45.

73 Eigil, *VS*, c. 14, 145. See Franz Staab, "Bonifatius, die *regula sancti patris Benedicti* und die Gründung des Klosters Fulda," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 47–61.

74 Tangl, no. 89a. See Theo Kölzer, "Bonifatius und Fulda: Rechtliche, diplomatische und kulturelle Aspekte," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 17–45.

convent after his death. He was successful: the foundation at Fulda has lasted for over a thousand years.

5 The Reformer

The death of Charles Martel in October 741 brought about a generational change in Frankish leadership,[75] one which directly affected the framework within which Boniface, ever dependent on political backing, was able to operate. During the brief power struggle between Charles's sons from his first marriage, Carloman (d. 754) and Pippin (the Younger) (d. 768), and their stepbrother Grifo (d. 753), Boniface immediately turned to the soon-vanquished Grifo[76] with a request for protection and help (but probably to the other two as well, in letters which are now lost). He was ultimately compelled to recognize that, in line with an agreement concluded between the victorious brothers in 742,[77] the entire east of the realm had fallen to Carloman, the older of the two mayors of the palace. Thereafter the mayors enjoyed equal status and in 743 elevated a Merovingian to the royal throne for the last time.[78] Carloman's reign proved fortuitous for Boniface: not only was he prepared to continue holding a protective hand over Boniface and his companions, he also promised to promote the revitalization of the entire Frankish Church. Carloman had – as Boniface immediately informed the new pope, Zachary – requested Boniface to make preparations for convening a synod in the part of the realm subject to his rule and had pledged to aid in reforming ecclesiastical discipline, which, according to Boniface's letter, had been languishing in Francia for sixty to seventy years.[79]

The synod was soon assembled and has been known since the 18th century as the Concilium Germanicum of 21 April 742; its resolutions were promulgated as a capitulary by the mayor of the palace.[80] The synod was attended by

75 Ulrich Nonn, "Die Nachfolge Karl Martells und die Teilung von Vieux-Poitiers," in *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751*, eds. Matthias Becher and Jörg Jarnut (Münster: 2004), 60–73.

76 Tangl, no. 48. See Matthias Becher, "Eine verschleierte Krise: Die Nachfolge Karl Martells 741 und die Anfänge der karolingischen Hofgeschichtsschreibung," in *Von Fakten und Fiktionen: Mittelalterliche Geschichtsdarstellungen und ihre kritische Aufarbeitung*, ed. Johannes Laudage (Cologne: 2003), 95–133.

77 Heinz Joachim Schüssler, "Die fränkische Reichsteilung von Vieux-Poitiers (742) und die Reform der Kirche in den Teilreichen Karlmanns und Pippins: Zu den Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Bonifatius," *Francia* 13 (1985), 47–112.

78 Semmler, "Bonifatius, die Karolinger und 'die Franken,'" 27. On the exact point in time see Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 139–46.

79 Tangl, no. 50, 82.

80 Tangl, no. 56, 98–101; Werminghoff (ed)., MGH Conc. 2.1, 1–4.

Archbishop Boniface and the five bishops recently appointed by him in the previous months (and who, like him, were still without a diocese), as well as by Reginfrid, who had already been resident in Cologne for some time, something which may provide a clue to the unnamed venue. The absence of the vast majority of the "bishops of our realm" was deliberate (though some sees may have been vacant) and served Boniface well: the radicalism with which the synod used traditional canon law to oppose prevailing custom was unchallenged.[81] Thus Boniface, as metropolitan bishop, was placed at the top of the episcopate. New incumbents were to be appointed to vacant sees; and annual synods were to drive forward the revitalization of the church. Priests were to subject the conduct of their offices and lives to the scrutiny of the bishops; monasteries were expected to follow the Benedictine Rule. All abhorrent heathen customs were to be abolished and laymen who had appropriated church assets were to restore them in full. That last demand was bound to provoke bitter resistance from the aristocratic ruling elite, who were accustomed to constructing their positions of power and military clout via the exploitation of former church property. Their obstructive influence was demonstrated at the subsequent synod, attended by an unknown number of bishops from Carloman's part of the realm, on 1 March 743 in Estinnes. It was determined, "in view of imminent wars," that church property might, in return for the payment of a tax, remain in the hands of its current owners after all. Otherwise, the previous year's reform objectives were confirmed.[82] On 3 March 744 Pippin, the mayor of the palace in the West, followed them, holding his own synod in Soissons at which no fewer than twenty-three bishops appeared. Here the restoration of church property was only mandated to the extent that monks and nuns depended on it for their livelihood.[83]

A further aim of the reforms initiated by Boniface came to the fore in Soissons, namely the general enforcement of the metropolitan constitution, a move which was also intended to trigger a change in personnel in the Frankish episcopate. After Grimo of Rouen had already been sent the *pallium* (and Rouen raised from diocese to archdiocese), it was decided in Soissons to grant the same primacy to the English Abel in Reims and to Hartbert in Sens.[84] This was primarily directed against Milo, a member of the upper aristocracy and

81 Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 209.

82 Tangl, no. 56, 101; Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2/1, 5. On the dating, see Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 134–46.

83 Werminghoff (ed.), MGH Conc. 2/1, 33–36.

84 Werminghoff (ed.), MGH Conc. 2/1, c. 3, 34. See Pangerl, *Die Metropolitanverfassung*, 17–20.

bishop of both Reims and Trier, who in Boniface's eyes epitomized the worldly clergy hostile to reform.[85] Hartbert was sent to Rome; on 22 June 744 he received from Pope Zachary[86] a letter addressed to Boniface which granted the *pallium* to the three new metropolitan bishops. However, before Hartbert was able to return home with it, Boniface found himself forced to inform Zachary that a *pallium* was now requested for Grimo alone and no longer for Abel and Hartbert. Zachary reacted with some consternation and affirmed Boniface's dignity as legate in the entire Frankish Church.[87] It was not until seven years later that Boniface openly revealed the reason for his change of mind in a letter to Zachary: "The Franks" had not kept their promises but kept postponing the matter until an increasingly distant future date.[88] Moreover, he, the archbishop, had personally encountered insurmountable resistance on the occasion of his abortive installation in Cologne in 745. Once again, the pope had already given his consent,[89] yet – as Boniface once again complained – the Franks subsequently "had not kept their word."[90] The Frank Agilolf was appointed to the episcopal throne at Cologne, and in 746–747 Boniface had to be content with Mainz, which was, however, not raised to the rank of a metropolitan see and was only vacant because the bishop there, Gewilib, had been deposed due to his participation in a blood feud.[91]

Boniface did succeed in organizing an all-Frankish synod attended by both mayors of the palace in Spring 745, although it lacked a concluding capitulary and only echoes of it in papal correspondence allow us to deduce that it took place.[92] Nonetheless, there is no doubt that his star was on the wane. In an encyclical to the Frankish rulers and their subjects written at the end of 745, Zachary urged them to follow Boniface's instructions,[93] yet Abel and Hartbert were unable to assert their authority against local opposition in the dioceses assigned to them. Boniface's plan for a metropolitan structure had failed and

85 Tangl, no. 87, 198. See Hans Hubert Anton, *Regesten der Bischöfe und Erzbischöfe von Trier 1* (Düsseldorf: 2015), 61; for an alternative view, see Olaf Schneider, *Erzbischof Hinkmar und die Folgen: Der vierhundertjährige Weg historischer Erinnerungsbilder von Reims nach Trier* (Berlin, New York: 2010), 66–108.

86 Tangl, no. 57.

87 Tangl, no. 58.

88 Tangl, no. 86, 193. See Semmler, "Bonifatius, die Karolinger und 'die Franken,'" 33.

89 Tangl, no. 60, 124.

90 Tangl, no. 80, 179.

91 Anon., *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 1, 91. See Franz Staab, "*Rudi populo rudis adhuc presul*: Zu den wehrhaften Bischöfen der Zeit Karl Martells," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, eds. Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn, and Michael Richter (Sigmaringen: 1994), 262–75.

92 Tangl, no. 60.

93 Tangl, no. 61.

was only realized in the next generation under Charlemagne.[94] In Bavaria an ugly fight broke out between Boniface and Bishop Virgil of Salzburg, a learned Irishman who had been appointed by Duke Odilo and whom Boniface accused of heresy.[95] Above all, however, Boniface lost his backing from Carloman, who in 747 renounced power and embarked upon a religious life in Rome.[96] The remaining mayor of the palace, Pippin, though he shared the objective of a root-and-branch renewal of the Frankish Church, considered it more politic to turn directly to Pope Zachary in this matter, as he delivered a catalogue listing twenty-seven separate questions on canon law to the pope in 746. In early 747 the pope issued a detailed response[97] without consulting his legate Boniface, who was merely urged to acquaint himself with it retrospectively and to spread its contents.[98] His exclusion from the decision-making process at the highest level is dealt with most discreetly in surviving observations by the participants; but around 790 his second-generation disciple, Liudger, later Bishop of Münster, attributed it bluntly to Frankish opponents, about whom he writes: "They began to speak out against him, to vilify him as much as they could, asserting that he was not worthy to hold the office of bishop as he was a stranger."[99]

Thus, it is extremely unlikely that Boniface was more closely involved when, in 750–751, Pippin set about claiming for himself, too, the authority to issue directives of canon law, a power previously limited to Rome. He did so in order to lend moral legitimacy to his grab for the Frankish kingdom, hitherto reserved for the Merovingians alone.[100] Thanks to the contemporaneous *Historia vel Gesta Francorum*, there is no reason to doubt either the inquiry directed to Pope Zachary and conveyed by Pippin's messengers, or Rome's favourable response to his plans.[101] However, modern scholarship has been highly sceptical

94 Pangerl, *Die Metropolitanverfassung*, 21–28.

95 Tangl, no. 80, 178. See Pádraig P. Ó Néill, "Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen," in *Virgil von Salzburg: Missionar und Gelehrter*, eds. Heinz Dopsch and Roswitha Juffinger (Salzburg: 1985), 76–83.

96 Jörg Jarnut, "Karlmann," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 16 (Berlin, New York: 2000), 280–82.

97 W. Gundlach (ed.), MGH Epp. 3 (Hanover: 1892), 479–87.

98 Tangl, no. 77.

99 Liudger, *VG*, c. 4, 71. See Stuart Airlie, "The Frankish Aristocracy as Supporters and Opponents of Boniface," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 255–69.

100 Matthias Becher and Jörg Jarnut (eds.), *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung* (Münster: 2004), *passim*.

101 B. Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover: 1896), 182. For a different view, see Rosamond McKitterick, "The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals," *English Historical Review* 115 (2000), 1–20.

about the subsequent embellishment of events in the *Annales regni Francorum* (not composed until ca. 790), with its abstract questions (about the discrepancy between *nomen* and *res*), and even more sceptical about the supposed anointing of the new king by Boniface,[102] who as papal legate would actually have been entitled to perform this act.[103] However, it remains true that Boniface played a decisive role in initiating the alliance concluded between the Carolingians and the papacy in 751, thanks to the fact that his activities in the Frankish realm had always been closely coordinated with Rome.

6 The End

Over seventy and plagued by the afflictions of old age, Boniface wrote to the pope and asked him to send a different priest to convene a synod in Francia. On 1 April 748 Zachary denied his request, as well as his wish to appoint a successor in Mainz so that he might devote himself solely to the duties of "legate and messenger of the Apostolic See," but the pope did grant him the ordination of an episcopal aide with the prospect of the appointee being his successor.[104] Lull was in the frame from the very beginning. A fellow countryman from Wessex approximately thirty-five years younger than Boniface, Lull had attached himself to the latter in Rome in 738 and in the meantime become his closest confidant.[105] After Lull had returned from a journey to Rome in 751, bringing the above-mentioned papal privilege for the monastery of Fulda with him,[106] he was, probably with Pippin's approval, ordained as a *chorepiscopus* by Boniface in 752 and designated the future leader of the English missionaries active on the Continent. Out of concern for their future, the archbishop turned to the influential Abbot Fulrad of Saint-Denis with the request that the king determine what provisions he wished to make for these strangers so that they should not be "scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd – also so that those peoples which are near the pagan border may not lose the law of Christ."[107]

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102 F. Kurze, MGH SRG 6 (Hanover: 1895), 8. On the anointing by Boniface, see Jörg Jarnut, "Wer hat Pippin 751 zum König gesalbt?," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982), 45–57.

103 Josef Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung* (Düsseldorf: 2003), 1–57.

104 Tangl, no. 80, 180.

105 Eckhard Freise, "Lul," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 15 (1987), 515–17.

106 Tangl, no. 89a.

107 Tangl, no. 93, 213.

Boniface visited Pippin's royal court in May 753[108] to address the fraught situation in the Frisian see of Utrecht, which had suffered neglect after the death of a bishop ordained by him. The see was now being claimed by Hildegar, Bishop of Cologne, as Boniface lamented in his last letter to Pope Stephen II.[109] Boniface obtained a written charter from Pippin confirming his jurisdiction over Utrecht,[110] appointed the Englishman Eoban as the new bishop, and embarked on a journey to Frisia. He must have known that an unprecedented event was on the horizon, namely a papal visit to Francia, to which end Pope Stephen II appeared at Pippin's court in spring and summer 754.[111] Regardless, Boniface continued on his way from Utrecht to his earlier sphere of missionary activity. On June 5, when he was on the point of administering the sacrament of confirmation to a number of newly baptized converts near Dokkum, not far from the North Sea coast, he and all his companions met their death in an ambush by robbers.[112] This bloody act of violence immediately cloaked the elderly archbishop in the robe of martyrdom.[113] His corpse was recovered and conveyed via Utrecht and Mainz to the monastery of Fulda,[114] which Boniface had long before chosen as his final resting place.

Wynfrith/Boniface was the leading representative of the English mission to the Continent. Through the spread of Christianity and a literate culture, as well as the establishment of episcopal sees and monasteries in Germania on the east of the Rhine, he prepared the way for the history of the Church in what was to become Germany. Through the revitalization of the Frankish territorial Church in alliance with the papacy, a revival taken up and pushed forward by the Carolingians, he opened up a European horizon for the Latin Middle Ages.

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108 Tangl, no. 107.

109 Tangl, no. 109. See Josef Semmler, "Die Friesenmission und der Eintritt der in der alten Provincia Germania II gelegenen Bistümer in die karolingische Reichskirche," *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 212 (2009), 22. On that letter, in which Boniface represented Utrecht history falsely, see Marco Mostert, "Bonifatius als Geschiedvervalser," *Madoc: Tijdschrift voor Mediëvistiek* 9 (1995), 217–19. The matter is summarized in Michel Aaij's chapter on the correspondence in this volume.

110 MGH DD Kar. 1, 6–8 (nos. 4, 5).

111 Pius Engelbert, "Papstreisen ins Frankenreich," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 88 (1993), 79–92.

112 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 49–52. See Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Die Ermordung des Erzbischofs Bonifatius durch die Friesen: Suche und Ausgestaltung eines Martyriums aus kirchenpolitischer Notwendigkeit?," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 87–124. For 755 as the year of his death, see Heinrich Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien* (Würzburg: 2003), 178–226.

113 Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachkleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter* (*754–1200*) (Fulda: 1993), *passim*.

114 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 52–56.

CHAPTER 2

Boniface's West Saxon Background

Barbara Yorke

1 Introduction[1]

Boniface must have been at least forty when he left for Frisia in 716,[2] an age when most people's basic character and preconceptions have become established so that even if one considers the second phase of Boniface's career, when he worked in mainland Europe, to have been the most significant, one still needs to study his formative years in Wessex as Wynfrith in order to appreciate the baggage that he took with him when he left his native land. Boniface grew up in an area on the western frontiers of Wessex where Anglo-Saxons were in a minority, but were seeking to impose secular overlordship and "correct" Christian practices on a British majority. Traditions of royal service, of trust in one's family and countrymen, and of a distrust of those who followed different practices help to explain some of the unusual features of Boniface's Continental career, such as the promotion of kinswomen or why popes and Frankish kings were so eager to acquire his services.

Although the broad outline of Boniface's career in England can be reconstructed, there are inevitable gaps and uncertainties, and in particular one would like to know more about events leading up to his decision to leave his native land. For the basic facts of his early life we are dependent on the details provided by Willibald of Mainz in his *Vita Bonifatii*. Willibald composed this *Vita* at some point between 754 and 769, at the request of Lull, who was Boniface's successor as bishop of Mainz (754–785), and Megingoz, his disciple who

1 This chapter revisits and updates Barbara Yorke, "The insular background to Boniface's Continental career," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken* (*754–2004*), eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 23–38. Some of the issues raised in that paper have since been explored in greater detail by John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54*, Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages 11 (Turnhout: 2010).

2 Boniface's birth is generally estimated to have occurred between 672 and 675, but it is a matter on which no greater precision is possible. See Franz Flaskamp, "Das Geburtsjahr des Wynfrith-Bonifatius," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 45 (1926), 339–44; Frank Barlow, "The English Background," in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Boniface and the Church at Crediton,* ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 26–27.

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became bishop of Wurzburg (763–769).[3] It seems likely that Willibald also came from Wessex, and so would have been familiar with the general ambience in which Boniface had grown up, even though he does not seem to have known him personally. However, he was in a good position, as he states, to consult others who had known Boniface well.[4] One should expect, as with all hagiography, that biographical realism will have been tempered by idealism and the overall aims that lay behind the composition. For instance, Willibald's insistence that the Benedictine Rule was followed by Boniface in Wessex seems to be mistaken, and the result of the greater significance accorded the Benedictine Rule at the time he wrote.[5] However, other passages do seem to accurately reflect Wessex at the time of Boniface's youth, such as the mention of itinerant priests coming to the settlement in which Boniface's family lived, probably a reference to the provision of pastoral care from minster centres.[6] Thus there seems no reason to reject the main details Willibald provides for Boniface's early life in Wessex, but in order to appreciate their significance they ought to be viewed against a broader background of West Saxon history that can be drawn from, among other sources, the *vitae* of Boniface's relatives who also worked in Germany, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History,* charters, and the letters to and from Boniface.[7]

2 Boniface's Family Background

In order to appreciate how Boniface's experiences in Wessex formed him, it is important to reconstruct as much as possible of his family background and relate it to events of the late 7th and early 8th centuries, when the kingdom of Wessex was taking in new lands to the south and west. Arguably Boniface's family and the church foundations with which he was associated were actively

3 Willibald, *VB*, prologue; Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (Harlow: 2001), 61–64.

4 Willibald, *VB*, c.1.

5 Christopher Holdsworth, "Saint Boniface the monk," *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 54–57; however, as Holdsworth discusses, a "mixed" rule that was in part influenced by the Benedictine Rule may have been followed. Willibald's statements that Boniface entered Exeter at the expected age of oblation (7) and was ordained priest at the correct canonical age (30) may merely be his expectation of when these events should have occurred.

6 Willibald, *VB*, c.1, 5; John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: 2005), 153–65.

7 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 10–16 for a succinct overview of sources.

involved in underpinning the territorial ambitions of the West Saxon kings during this time.

Boniface was born as Wynfrith into a noble family, probably based in Devon, for there is an implication that the minster at Exeter which he entered as an oblate in the time of Abbot Wulfhard was close to his father's residence.[8] The tradition that he was born at Crediton in Devon is not recorded until the 1330s, some 600 years after his death, and so is not necessarily reliable.[9] His West Country origin is confirmed by Leoba in her one surviving letter to him.[10] We do not know the names of Boniface's parents, but we can identify some of his other relatives. Leoba reminded Boniface in her letter of his kinship with her mother Æbbe and of his friendship with her father Dynne.[11] It appears that Leoba was considerably younger than Boniface, who seems to have been of the same generation as her father; possibly the degree of kinship between them was something in the order of first cousins once removed.[12] It also appears that Boniface was related to the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald, and their sister Walburg, who were originally associated with the minster of (Bishop's) Waltham, in southern Hampshire. Their kinswoman Hygeburg states that Boniface invited Wynnebald to join him in Germany because of their kinship.[13] It will be noted that Boniface's Old English name Wynfrith shares alliteration on the letter "W" with this family and the element "Wyn" with one of the brothers.

The Bishop's Waltham family is not the only link Boniface had with Hampshire, for after his initial training at Exeter under Wulfhard he went to the minster at Nursling (*Nhutscelle*) under Abbot Wynbert.[14] Nursling and Bishop's Waltham are only some 12 miles apart as the crow flies, being to the north-east and the south-east respectively of Hamwic (now Southampton). Their *parochiae* may have shared a common boundary though there are problems in

8 Willibald, *VB*, c.1, 6–7; Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: 1946), 70–71.

9 Nicholas Orme, "The Church in Crediton from Saint Boniface to the Reformation," in *The Greatest Englishman,* ed. Reuter, 107–08; Robert Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon: Emergence of a Shire* (Exeter: 2008), 269–77.

10 Tangl, no. 29.

11 These details are confirmed in the *Vita Leobae* by Rudolf of Fulda (written in the 830s) which also reveals that her original name given by her parents was "Thrutgeba"; Rudolf, *VL*, c. 6, 124.

12 Just possibly Æbbe was Boniface's sister, but if they were that closely related perhaps Leoba would have made it clear.

13 Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 4, 109: "qui carnale propinquitatis et sanguini copulatione illo fuerat sociatus" ("who was linked to him by worldly kinship and shared descent").

14 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 9.

reaching any certainty over the ecclesiastical arrangements around Southampton Water at such an early date.[15] On Wynbert's death in *c.*716, Boniface was expected to succeed him as abbot of Nursling, but apparently because he had by that time committed himself to working in Germania, he declined the office.[16] Although Willibald was anxious to present Boniface's election as abbot as fully in accordance with Benedictine practice, it is in fact unlikely that Nursling followed the Benedictine Rule at such an early date.[17] A stronger factor governing succession in early Anglo-Saxon minsters was hereditary right.[18] As Boniface/Wynfrith shared a first-name element with Wynbert of Nursling and had other family connections with Hampshire, we might be justified in suggesting that his family came originally from Hampshire, that he was related to Wynbert of Nursling, and that on that account he was expected to succeed him as abbot upon his death.

These few facts that can be gleaned about the family connections of Boniface take on more significance when we view them against what we know of broader developments in Wessex in the latter part of the 7th century. Boniface's parents, and perhaps the grandparents of Leoba, must have been of the first generation of West Saxons to live in east Devon, which at the time of Boniface's birth had only recently passed from control of the British king of Dumnonia to that of the kings of the West Saxons. In fact Boniface's entry into the monastery of Exeter in ca. 680 is often used as one of the essential markers with which to date "the westward expansion of Wessex."[19] The new settlers must have come from West Saxon territories to the east so the association of Boniface's kin with southern Hampshire meets these expectations. However, southern Hampshire itself had only come under West Saxon control around the middle of the 7th century, when the kings of the West Saxons (known at this period as the Gewisse) had begun to move away from their original base on the upper Thames to take in territory to the south and west. Previously the area of southern Hampshire which included Nursling and Bishop's Waltham, together with the Isle of Wight across the Solent, had formed part of a province

15 Patrick Hase, "The Mother Churches of Hampshire," in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950–1200*, ed. John Blair, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology 17 (Oxford: 1988), 45–66.

16 Willibald, *VB*, IV, c. 5, 18–20.

17 Holdsworth, "Saint Boniface the Monk," 54–57.

18 Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 100–08.

19 William G. Hoskins, *The Westward Expansion of Wessex*, Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers no. 13 (Leicester: 1970), 57–60; Barbara Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages,* Studies in the Early History of Britain (London: 1995), 57–64.

that was described as "Jutish" rather than "Saxon," probably because it was in alliance with the Jutes of Kent.[20] Control of the Solent was fiercely contested between Mercia and Wessex in the 660s. The West Saxon annexation of the province was completed by Caedwalla's savage conquest of the Isle of Wight in 686, and Bede's account makes it clear that the area of southern Hampshire opposite the island was securely in West Saxon hands by this point.[21] It is therefore possible that it was only in Boniface's grandfather's generation that the family had moved into southern Hampshire as part of West Saxon expansion into that area.

The family must also have been among the first to embrace Christianity and to take up positions in the church. The conversion of Wessex can be said to have begun with the baptism of King Cynegils in 635 by Birinus who was given Dorchester-on-Thames for his see in the original West Saxon homeland of the upper Thames.[22] However, kings wavered in their commitment to Christianity; Centwine apparently abdicated in 685 to enter a monastery,[23] but his successor Caedwalla had not been baptized.[24] Not long after the see moved from Dorchester-on-Thames to Winchester in ca. 660, there was a hiatus when the province seems to have been without a bishop, and unbroken continuity of episcopal succession was only achieved with the appointment of Leuthere in 670.[25] It is likely in the period between 635 and 688 that both Christianity and pagan practices were publicly celebrated in Wessex, and that it was only with the accession of Ine in 688 that a full commitment to Christianity was made. Such a period of dual practice was to be found in other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as well and is probably explained by a reluctance of kings to completely abandon the old religion which had helped to support their rule.[26] However, despite the reservations of some kings both with the new religion and with some of their bishops, it appears that many of the West Saxon nobility adopted Christianity from 635 onwards and that it was utilised to underpin the kingdom's acquisition of new territory. The takeover of the Jutish areas seems to have been

20 Barbara Yorke, "The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex," in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett, Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester: 1989), 84–96.

21 Bede, *HE*, c. 15–16, 380–85.

22 Bede, *HE*, III, c. 7, 232–37.

23 *Aldhelm: Poetic Works*, eds. Michael Lapidge and James Rosier (Cambridge: 1985), 40–41, 47–48. He may well have been forced to abdicate by Caedwalla.

24 Caedwalla was baptized and died in Rome in 689: Bede, *HE,* IV, c. 7, 468–73.

25 Yorke, *Wessex*, 171–76.

26 Barbara Yorke, "The reception of Christianity at the Anglo-Saxon royal courts," in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud: 1999), 152–73.

accompanied by the conversion of the inhabitants and the establishment of minster churches, including Nursling and Bishop's Waltham, within what are likely to have been secular administrative subdivisions.[27] As the West Saxons moved westwards the need for additional churchmen was all the greater because those areas of western Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, and Devon which had remained free of Saxon control until the 7th century were already Christian. Christianity had unbroken continuity in these parts from the time of its introduction in the 4th century when the ancestors of its British inhabitants had lived under Roman rule.[28] Many of their churches seem to have been taken over by West Saxons, and preservation of Christian worship, albeit on Anglo-Saxon terms, may have been part of treaty arrangements made when these areas surrendered to West Saxon control.[29] Exeter, where Boniface began his ecclesiastical career, is a good example of such a site. As a *civitas* capital Exeter can be expected to have been the site of a major Roman church in the late Roman period, perhaps even a bishopric, and some support for such an interpretation has come from the excavation of Christian burials which were radio-carbon dated to the immediate post-Roman period, in the vicinity of the late Saxon and medieval cathedral.[30]

The family of Boniface therefore seems likely to have played a role in both the territorial expansion of Wessex and in the adoption of Christianity: in fact, these two things seem to have been closely connected. Wynbert of Nursling, whom we have suggested might have been related to Boniface, was a major figure in the emergent West Saxon church. Wynbert is named as the scribe of a number of early West Saxon charters. The naming of a notary is an unusual feature in England and suggests the influence of the two Frankish bishops of Wessex, Agilbert and his nephew Leuthere, or possibly of Agilbert's protégé Bishop Wilfrid, who was influential at the court of King Caedwalla (685–88) when he

27 Hase, "Mother Churches." A Mercian-backed mission led by the exiled Bishop Wilfrid from Northumbria and based in the South Saxon province may already have been active in part of the Jutish province: Bede, *HE* IV, c. 13.

28 Charles Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (London: 1981); Yorke, *Wessex*, 155–64, 177–81; Susan Pearce, *South-Western Britain in the Early Middle Ages* (London and New York: 2004), 77–196.

29 The legal rights of the British inhabitants, albeit as second-class citizens, are set out in the laws of King Ine (688–725); see Louis M. Alexander, "The Legal Status of the Native Britons in late Seventh-Century Wessex as Reflected in the Law Code of Ine," *Haskins Society Journal* 7 (1995), 31–38.

30 Christopher Henderson and Paul Bidwell, "The Saxon minster at Exeter," in *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. Susan Pearce, British Archaeological Reports, British series 102 (Oxford: 1982), 145–75; Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon*, 74–77.

was in exile from his native Northumbria.[31] Wynbert was a contemporary of Abbot Aldhelm of Malmesbury, who played a key role in the reconciliation of the British church to Anglo-Saxon rule and was appointed the first bishop of Sherborne in Dorset in 705. A letter survives from Aldhelm to Wynbert requesting his help in the recovery of an estate purchased by Malmesbury which the king (probably Caedwalla) had granted to another individual.[32] All of this suggests that Wynbert was an influential individual used to moving in royal and episcopal circles, a *clericus regis* as he is described by William of Malmesbury.[33] Wynbert seems to have equipped Nursling with a notable library and school, to which Boniface came to complete his education in grammar, rhetoric, and Scripture, and in which he subsequently became a teacher.[34] Manuscripts thought to contain Boniface's handwriting may have come from Nursling.[35] Judging by the Latin style of his letters, surviving verses, and his *ars grammatica* and *ars metrica*, the education he received was strongly indebted to Aldhelm (d. 709).[36] Towards the end of his life, when his eyesight was failing, Boniface wrote to Bishop Daniel of Winchester asking him to send a manuscript containing the "text of the six prophets bound together in one volume, all written out in full with clear letters" that had belonged to his "former abbot and teacher," Wynbert, thereby showing that Boniface studied directly under his abbot while at Nursling.[37]

3 Boniface and Anglo-Saxon "Pioneer" Society

The Anglo-Saxons have sometimes been seen as demonstrating many of the characteristics of a pioneer society,[38] but this is not a feature that was

31 Heather Edwards, *The Charters of the Early West Saxon Kingdom*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 198 (Oxford: 1988), 85–86, 105–06; Patrick Sims-Williams, "St Wilfrid and Two Charters of AD 676 and 680," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 39 (1988), 163–83.

32 *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. Rudolph Ehwald, MGH AA 15 (Berlin: 1915), 502–03; *Aldhelm: Prose Works*, eds. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge: 1979), 151 and 170; Edwards, *Charters,* 94–97.

33 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum, 1: Text and Translation*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: 2007), 207–11, 532–37.

34 Willibald*, VB*, c. 2, 7–11; Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), 37–40.

35 M.B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: 1991), 121–42; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 40.

36 Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE 8 (Cambridge: 1994), 61–67, 248–53.

37 Tangl, no. 63, 131; trans. Talbot, 118: "…quem venerandae memoriae Uuinbertus abbas et magister quondam meus de hac vita ad Dominum migrans dereliquit, ubi sex prophete in uno corpore claris et absolutis litteris scripti repperientur."

38 For instance, Christopher Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England* (London and Sydney: 1984), 6–20.

necessarily restricted to the so-called settlement period of the 5th and 6th centuries. The family of Boniface may have moved to new territory in each generation. Such instability was probably not unusual in 7th-century Wessex, and the laws of Ine laid down what dependent peasants a nobleman could take with him if he moved his residence and the condition in which he should leave the cultivated land.[39] Boniface's own emigration to new areas overseas perhaps becomes more understandable in such a context. Considering the characteristics of the settler mindset he may have taken with him on his journey into new territory may enable us to gain a greater understanding of Boniface.

When his parents moved into the vicinity of Exeter, they would have been part of a relatively small group of nobles and free settlers who had come to live among a British majority. Obligations to kin were of major significance throughout Anglo-Saxon society, but there would have been a particularly strong reliance on one's own family and countrymen in the type of circumstances in which Boniface's parents lived, and it is likely to have been mirrored in the reliance Boniface placed on his kin and fellow West Saxons in Germania. One of the most striking ways in which the mission of Boniface differed from that of Willibrord was in the inclusion of women: none of the Irish missions, whether to England or elsewhere in Europe, included women. Boniface, who was usually a stickler for correct behaviour among ecclesiastics and who advised Archbishop Cuthbert to forbid Anglo-Saxon women from travelling to Rome,[40] apparently made an exception for the foreign travel of his own kinswomen.

We have the most detailed information on those co-workers of Boniface who were related to him or were his close associates.[41] Like many later colonizers, the West Saxons who moved to Germania went as family groups, the first male settlers sending home for other members when progress had been made. The new arrivals may have helped support those already established, but due weight must also be given to the expectation that those who had met with success in new territory would share it with other family members. Leoba's letter to Boniface reveals that it was she who took the initiative in contacting him, and she reminds him of his obligations to her as he is her closest surviving male relative.[42]

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39 *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. Frederick Attenborough (Cambridge: 1922), c. 62–66, 56–59.

40 Tangl, no. 78.

41 Barbara Yorke, "The Bonifacian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex," *EME* 7, no. 2 (1998), 154–72.

42 Tangl, no. 29.

The role of Anglo-Saxon women in the church seems to bear out the observation that in pioneer societies, whether medieval or later, women were often able to undertake roles that would otherwise be the reserve of men.[43] The Anglo-Saxons were unusual in the number of significant religious houses containing both men and women that were controlled by abbesses. The impetus for this type of religious foundation came from northern Francia where noble families with which the Anglo-Saxon royal houses had connections had founded religious houses on their own lands which were supervised by women of the family.[44] It was a type of foundation particularly suited to the needs of the Anglo-Saxon royal houses where princes could not be spared to enter the church, but unmarried princesses and widowed queens could be usefully employed attending to the spiritual needs and reputations of their families.[45] The so-called double houses were among the most influential religious communities in Anglo-Saxon England and sometimes occupied strategic locations. Some of the churches established in western Wessex as part of the spread of Anglo-Saxon control seem to have been supervised by abbesses. The best recorded example is Wimborne in Dorset which Leoba entered as a child, but there were other female-controlled houses in the west of Wessex (such as the house of the royal Abbess Cyneburg with which Lull was originally associated) whose locations cannot be identified.[46] The double houses were a familiar part of the ecclesiastical landscape to Boniface, who seems to have taught a number of women from such communities, even though he never seems to have lived in one himself.[47] In placing Tauberbischofsheim, Kitzingen, and Ochsenfurt under the control of abbesses, Boniface was following in some ways an established Anglo-Saxon tradition, but Leoba in particular seems to have been more personally involved in the provision of pastoral care for the local population than was the norm in England.[48] Most nunneries that we know much

43 Carol Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum* 68, no. 2 (1993), 363–87.

44 Alain Dierkens, "Prolégomènes à une histoire des relations culturelles entre les îles britanniques et le continent pendant le haut Moyen Âge," in *La Neustrie: les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, ed. H. Atsma, 2 vols (Sigmaringen: 1989), vol. 2, 371–94.

45 Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: 2003).

46 Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800*, CSASE 5 (Cambridge: 1990), 238–42; Yorke, "Female Religious in Wessex," 166–68.

47 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 10–11. In Tangl, no. 13, Boniface's correspondent Ecgburg describes herself as "the lowliest of your male or female pupils."

48 Yitzhak Hen, "*Milites Christi Utriusque Sexus:* Gender and the Politics of Conversion in the Circle of Boniface," *Revue bénédictine* 109, nos. 1–2 (1999), 17–31. However, this was not necessarily completely without precedent in Anglo-Saxon England: see Yorke, *Nunneries*, 123–27.

about in England were founded by kings rather than bishops,[49] but the circumstances in Hessia and Thuringia were different. The nunneries Boniface established enabled him to place people in authority in whom he had the greatest confidence and to whom he had an obligation; in both cases this is because the women were related to him or to close associates such as Lull.[50] But the role he gave Leoba, to watch over the community of Fulda after his death, was truly exceptional, and suggests that he saw her, apparently his closest surviving relative, as his earthly and spiritual heir.[51] In tough situations, surrounded by potentially hostile people, it seemed to Anglo-Saxons that kin could be relied upon more than anyone else, and, if there were not enough male kin to do all that was necessary, they turned to their female relatives. Boniface seems to have been so imbued with this form of thinking that it even overrode what others might have thought inappropriate: giving his kinswoman Leoba visiting rights in a male community.

4 Boniface and the British Church

Although the initial work of conversion and church establishment had been carried out in Wessex before Boniface began his ecclesiastical career, there must still have been much pagan belief and practice to counteract, which would have stood him in good stead when he encountered similar conditions in Hessia. John-Henry Clay has explored in a most interesting way how Boniface's experience with the West Saxon church's reaction to pre-Christian beliefs embedded in the landscape would have enabled him to recognise and deal with comparable phenomena in Hessia.[52] Just as significant for forming Boniface's characteristics as a working ecclesiastic were West Saxon experiences with the Christians already established within Wessex before it became an Anglo-Saxon kingdom.

49 The best parallel for Boniface's actions is Bishop Eorcenwald of London's foundation of the double house of Barking for his sister Æthelburg, but even this house had close links with the East Saxon royal house; Yorke, *Nunneries*, 26–29.

50 Rudolf, *VL*, c. 14, 128 tells us that Thecla, who became abbess of Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt, was related to Leoba. Thecla need not therefore have been directly related to Boniface as well, but kinship with Leoba would have been sufficient to bring her into Boniface's inner circle.

51 Rudolf, *VL*, c. 17–23, 129–31.

52 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death* (n.1); see also James Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World 690–900*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 19 (Turnhout: 2009), 113–44.

The British inhabitants of Wessex had been introduced to Christianity when it had been formally adopted by the late Roman Empire, and the religion flourished in the 5th and 6th centuries when the British governed their own affairs.[53] When Pope Gregory despatched his famous mission to England in 596, he envisaged that its leader, Augustine, would become metropolitan of all the churches in Britain – that is those of the British as well as the English – presumably on the assumption that the unity of the former Roman province of *Britannia* still had some validity.[54] But meetings arranged between Augustine and representatives of the British church went badly.[55] Not only did the British representatives refuse to recognise Augustine's authority and declined to work with him in evangelizing the Anglo-Saxons, but they reiterated their attachment to customs that "were not in keeping with the unity of the Church,"[56] including methods of calculating Easter and forms of baptism. From this time on the popes looked on the British church with increasing suspicion and it began to be seen as potentially heretical. Bede has Augustine threaten the British clergy "that, if they refused to accept peace from their brethren, they would have to accept war from their enemies."[57] Anglo-Saxon kings were therefore sanctioned to do what they wanted to do anyway, that is, to expand into British-held territories and seize their assets. The recently converted Anglo-Saxons received official papal support for their "correction" of the much longer established British church.

Boniface's youth in the minster of Exeter was very much part of this process. Exeter is likely to have been one of the places confiscated from British clergy and had probably been placed under Anglo-Saxon control only shortly before Boniface entered it in ca. 680.[58] It was on the edges of the British kingdom of Dumnonia of the south-west. After the synod of Hertford in 672 that was concerned with enforcing church unity[59] (or perhaps a subsequent synod

53 Pearce, *South-western Britain*, 77–134.

54 Bede, *HE*, I, c. 29, 104–07; Clare Stancliffe, "The British Church and the Mission of Augustine," in *St Augustine and the Conversion of England*, ed. Richard Gameson (Stroud: 1999), 107–51.

55 Bede, *HE*, II, c.2, 134–43. A site at Kemble on the borders of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire has been proposed as the site of the meetings; see Bruce Eagles, "Augustine's Oak," *Medieval Archaeology* 48 (2003), 175–78.

56 Stancliffe, "British church," 130–40. Bede, *HE*, II, c. 2, 140–41: "sed et alia plurima unitati ecclesiasticae contraria faciebant."

57 Bede, *HE*, II, c. 2, 140–41: "…si pacem cum fratribus accipere nollent, bellum ab hostibus forent accepturi."

58 Henderson and Bidwell, "The Saxon minster at Exeter," *passim*; Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon*, 74–77.

59 Bede, *HE*, IV, c. 5, 348–55.

with similar concerns), Abbot Aldhelm of Malmesbury was commissioned to ensure the conformity of the British of the south-west. A letter survives from him to King Geraint of Dumnonia setting out the issues in some detail and in uncompromising terms.[60] A poem by Aldhelm, the *Carmen rhythmicum*, suggests that he had been successful in persuading Geraint to allow him to travel within his territories in Devon and Cornwall to try to achieve conformity.[61] The establishment of the Anglo-Saxon church in Exeter which Boniface entered would have been part of this process of enforcing conformity on the British Christians of the south-west as they became part of the kingdom of Wessex.

It is likely that Aldhelm (ca. 639–709), who had studied with Theodore at Canterbury and was strongly influenced by him,[62] set the tone for the West Saxon church in which Boniface grew up and of which he became an active member.[63] Aldhelm's complex and distinctive Latin style seems to have influenced that of Boniface, and then that of others whom Boniface went on to teach,[64] so it is likely that he also absorbed many of Aldhelm's attitudes and prejudices. In his letter to King Geraint and the rhythmical poem on his trip through *diram Domnoniam* ("dire Dumnonia") Aldhelm displays a certain disdain towards the British that was founded on feelings of religious and ethnic superiority.[65] Many of Aldhelm's attitudes were shared by that other major writer from the early Anglo-Saxon church, Bede, who if anything was even more prejudiced against the British than Aldhelm and believed that British churchmen had failed in a basic Christian duty by apparently refusing to assist in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.[66] On the other hand, Bede was more disposed to be tolerant towards many of the Irish. Although Aldhelm may have been taught by the Irishman Maildubh at Malmesbury and had probably studied in Irish schools, he

60 Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 480–86; Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 140–43, 155–60; Duncan Probert, "New light on Aldhelm's letter to King Gerent of Dumnonia," in *Aldhelm and Sherborne*: *Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, eds. Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (Oxford: 2010), 110–28.

61 Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera,* 524–28; Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, 171–79; Probert, "New light," 112–14.

62 Michael Lapidge, "The career of Aldhelm," *ASE* 36 (2007), 15–69; George Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Ending of Late Antiquity*, Studia Traditionis Theologiae (Turnhout: 2015), 31–63.

63 Theresa Hall, *Minster Churches in the Dorset Landscape*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 304 (Oxford: 2000), 79–84.

64 Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, 61–67, 248–53.

65 Probert, "New Light," 114–19; Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 22–26.

66 Thomas Charles-Edwards, "Bede, the Irish and the Britons," *Celtica* 15 (1983), 42–52; Clare Stancliffe, *Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish,* Jarrow lecture (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 2003).

became more critical of Irish practices and traditions of learning and became involved in heated exchanges with Irish scholars after his time with Theodore at Canterbury.[67]

Against this background we can readily understand why Boniface was so zealous in stamping out practices he considered to depart from the accepted norm when he worked in Germania. He was suspicious of native clergy who had not been trained by him, and even more so of the Irish whom he encountered.[68] Boniface even questioned certain practices he observed in Rome, and was anxious to establish whether the *Responsiones* sent by Gregory I to Augustine were genuine, as he found a ruling that marriage could be allowed to those related in the third degree contrary to his understanding of the issue.[69] Boniface's supreme sense of his own correctness developed out of his identity as a West Saxon Christian and can be considered part of his inheritance from West Saxon predecessors such as Aldhelm.[70]

5 Boniface and the Missionary Impulse

Boniface's initial intention in leaving Wessex in 716 was apparently to undertake mission in Frisia, where the Northumbrian Willibrord and his followers were already established. Although Boniface was subsequently diverted by Pope Gregory II to work in Hessia and Thuringia, it seems to have been his avowed aim to return to the mission field in Frisia, a decision which led directly to his death at Dokkum in 754. We can expect that Boniface was influenced by the strong sense of an inheritance of Christian mission and *peregrinatio* in the insular world. For the Anglo-Saxons the ideals of conversion and religion came not only from their own apostle, Pope Gregory I,[71] but also from the Irish and – though Boniface might have been surprised to learn this – ultimately, from the British church, for Patrick, "the apostle of the Irish" who did so much to inspire the idea of *peregrinatio*, was a Briton, probably from the north-west

67 Barbara Yorke, "Aldhelm's Irish and British connections," in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric,* eds. Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (Oxford: 2010), 164–80; Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, 31–63.

68 Levison, *England and the Continent*, 78–93; Timothy Reuter, "Saint Boniface and Europe," in *The Greatest Englishman,* ed. Reuter, 69–94.

69 Tangl, nos. 33 and 51.

70 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 256–70.

71 Robert Markus, "Gregory the Great and the Origins of a Papal Missionary Strategy," *Studies in Church History* 6 (1970), 29–38.

of modern England.[72] The insular world was very aware of the injunction to Christ's disciples to carry the gospels to the ends of the earth, and that Britain and Ireland could be seen as occupying the northern limits.[73] The Anglo-Saxons were also conscious that their former homelands formed a further extremity that had yet to be reached by the word of God. Aldhelm and Boniface both exhibit a strong sense of the north German identity that had been firmly embedded in Anglo-Saxon culture since the 5th century.[74] It is likely to have been of particular resonance in areas like western Wessex where Saxon settlers would have been conscious of being in a minority that needed to reinforce their ties to the Continental homeland in order to maintain their position. Boniface was to write movingly of the link between the Old Saxons and the Anglo-Saxons when he declared that "we are of one and the same blood and bone,"[75] and surviving letters suggest his appeal struck a chord throughout the southern Anglo-Saxon provinces.[76]

Boniface was apparently the first missionary to the Germanic homelands from the south of England, and so spearheaded the involvement of southern English in a missionary field which had hitherto been the preserve of Northumbrians, particularly from the foundation of Rath Melsigi (Clonmelsh) in Ireland where Willibrord had been based.[77] Exactly how Boniface learnt of the mission to Frisia is not explained in the *vitae*, though there was a long tradition of links between Wessex and Bernician Northumbria, including with Bishop Wilfrid who had been Willibrord's abbot when he was at Ripon.[78] Willibald,

72 Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background to Irish *peregrinatio*," *Celtica* 11 (1976), 43–59.

73 For example, Romans 30:18. Jennifer O'Reilly, "Islands and Idols at the Ends of the Earth: Exegesis and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*," in *Bède le Vénérable: Entre tradition et postérité/The Venerable Bede: Tradition and Posterity*, eds. Stéphane Lebecq, Michel Perrin and Olivier Szerwiniack (Lille: 2005), 119–45.

74 Nicholas Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven and London: 1989); John Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 7 (1994), 49–59.

75 Tangl, no. 46: "De uno sanguine et de uno osse sumus." The letter was written in 738 when Charles Martel hoped to initiate a major campaign against the Old Saxons which did not in fact lead to opportunities for missionary work as Boniface had hoped.

76 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*, 41–59; Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 257–71.

77 Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Rath Melsigi, Willibrord and the Earliest Echternach Manuscripts," *Peritia* 3 (1984), 17–42.

78 *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: 1927), 16–17; James Palmer, "Wilfrid and the Frisians," in *Wilfrid. Abbot, Bishop, Saint: Papers from the 1300th Anniversary Conferences*, ed. Nicholas Higham (Donington: 2013), 231–42.

Boniface's biographer, juxtaposes an account of the legation that Boniface led to Canterbury with his decision to go to Frisia.[79] Was the work of Willibrord's mission discussed at church councils he attended, and was there a desire in Canterbury, the seat of the Gregorian mission, for involvement of someone from the southern churches in the North Sea mission? Possibly Boniface was sent to explore the possibility of establishing a southern mission to Frisia in 716, but this turned out to be not possible and he returned to Wessex, though he was subsequently to work with Willibrord in Frisia between 719 and 722.[80]

In travelling to Rome in 718 to win papal support for his desire to work abroad, Boniface can also be seen as following not only Willibrord,[81] but also the established insular tradition of travel to the Holy City, which can be linked with the Anglo-Saxon consciousness of their evangelization by papal mission.[82] Prominent West Saxons who had visited Rome before him included Aldhelm and Caedwalla, who possibly travelled there together in 688 when Caedwalla abdicated in order to be baptized in Rome, where he died in 689.[83] Only two years later his kinsmen Willibald and Wynnebald also travelled to Rome from their Hampshire base.[84] Willibald went on to journey even further, to Jerusalem and beyond.[85] On his return in 729 he entered the monastery of Monte Cassino, before being directed by Pope Gregory III to join Boniface in Germany.

Boniface's interest in mission and in Rome can be readily understood in the context of contemporary insular preoccupations, but his decision to embark on this new phase in his life still seems somewhat surprising. By 716 Boniface had an established reputation as a teacher, particularly famed for his interpretations of the scriptures, and had taught religious men and women

79 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 13–16.

80 Willibald does not actually say that Boniface was intending to join Willibrord's mission in 716, though it has been usually assumed that that was what he was trying to do as he did work with Willibrord 719–22.

81 Levison, *England and the Continent*, 72.

82 Francesca Tinti (ed.), *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages: Pilgrimage, Art and Politics* (Turnhout: 2014).

83 Bede, *HE*, V, c.7, 468–73; Lapidge, "Career of Aldhelm," 52–64; Joanna Story, "Aldhelm and Old St Peter's, Rome," *ASE* 39 (2011), 7–20.

84 Hygeburg, *VWill*, 86–106; trans. Talbot, 153–77.

85 Rodney Aist, "Images of Jerusalem: The Religious Imagination of Willibald of Eichstätt," in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, eds. Hans Sauer and Joanna Story, Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies 3 (Tempe: 2011), 179–98; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World,* 249–80.

throughout the south of England.[86] He had written treatises on grammar and Latin metre, and his letters indicate his mastery of Latin prose.[87] By 716 Boniface had also begun to take on additional roles in royal service that took him outside Wessex. After a rebellion, whose details are unfortunately unspecified by Willibald, Boniface had been entrusted by King Ine of Wessex with a delicate diplomatic mission to Kent, which he carried out so successfully that he returned with an enhanced reputation among both the clergy and the lay nobility.[88] In Kent he seems to have impressed not only Archbishop Berhtwald, but also at least one of the aristocratic abbesses of a Kentish royal minster, and corresponded subsequently with Abbess Eangyth and her daughter Heahburg (Bugga).[89] By the time Boniface had returned to Wessex after his abortive visit to Frisia, Wynbert of Nursling had died. Boniface could have succeeded him as abbot which would have enhanced his position within Wessex, but he chose not to do so.[90]

But were his achievements in England sufficient to satisfy a man of ambition, as Boniface appears to have been? His chances of becoming a bishop in Wessex may have been remote in 716. The incumbents of the two West Saxon bishoprics had been appointed relatively recently, Daniel of Winchester in c.705 and Forthhere of Sherborne in 709, and they were not to retire until 744 and 737 respectively.[91] But even if a see had become vacant at an earlier point, Boniface, particularly when he only held the position of monastic teacher at Nursling, may not have been seen as sufficiently highly ranked to be a prime candidate,[92] though his prospects would surely have been improved if he had taken up the position as abbot of Nursling. The position of archbishop would have been quite unattainable for him, not least because Kent was not under the political control of Wessex during the 8th century. Boniface's rather mysterious withdrawal from the Frisian mission in 722, and run-ins with other ecclesiastics in Francia later in his career, suggest that Boniface was not the easiest

86 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2–3, 8–14.

87 Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, 61–67.

88 For all these events (which are not otherwise recorded) see Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 13–15.

89 Tangl, nos. 14, 15, 27, and 94. Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 106, n. 213 argues for a West Saxon identity, but Tangl, no. 105 indicates that Heahburg was related to and in contact with King Æthelbert II of Kent (725–762). Note that Boniface's correspondent Eadburg (Tangl, nos. 10, 30 and 35), who is often identified with the abbess of Minster-in-Thanet, is more likely to have been a teacher at Wimborne: Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 212, n. 6, 243–44; Yorke, "The Bonifacian Mission," 150–52.

90 Willibald, *VB,* c. 5, 18–20.

91 Bede, *HE,* V, c. 18, 512–17.

92 Mary Garrison pers. comm.

of colleagues, and possibly someone who found it difficult to work with others unless he was clearly in charge.[93]

Perhaps by 716 Boniface's family was not as well placed in Wessex as it might once have been, for it was not just Boniface who felt the need to travel abroad. His young kinsmen Willibald and Wynnebald, together with their father, left the country only a couple of years after Boniface, and also did not return.[94] Although the Solent area had been at the forefront of West Saxon royal ambitions in the second half of the 7th century, these had transferred further west by 700.[95] True, Boniface's own father and other kin seem to have been established in Devon and are likely to have been part of the westward expansion, but royal patronage could be fickle or require difficult compromises, especially perhaps for churchmen in royal service. Boniface was later highly critical of the degree of influence exercised by King Æthelbald of Mercia in the English Church, and more generally of the infusion of secular mores in the English minsters.[96] Of course, this letter was sent much later in his career when Boniface's own views are likely to have evolved, but there may be an indication within it of reservations about the interaction between Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical and royal power that could have strengthened his resolve to leave his native land. Or did the regime change in Mercia (which had a contested border with Wessex) somehow have implications for the position of Boniface? Is it just coincidence that 716, the year in which Boniface first left England, was also the year that Æthelbald came to power in Mercia? Of course, Boniface showed himself adept at working with Frankish kings, and had no doubt acquired some useful experience of how to tailor church and lay elite interests from his experience with the court of King Ine,[97] but with the pope as his main patron Boniface acquired much more independence as a churchman than he would have enjoyed if he had stayed in Wessex.[98]

Although Boniface's actions could be interpreted as the result of an established missionary impulse in the insular world, one should be on the lookout as well for a more complex interweaving of push and pull factors which are often found in narratives of migration. The rhetoric of mission and *peregrinatio* plays a prominent role in the letters of Boniface and his circle,[99] but that

93 Levison, *England and the Continent,* 72–93.
94 Hygeburg, *VWill,* 86–106.
95 Yorke, *Wessex*, 52–64.
96 Tangl, no. 73. The letter was sent in 746 or 747.
97 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*, 77–112; Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 92–100, 349–70.
98 Levison, *England and the Continent*, 72–74.
99 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 237–78.

need not mean that there were not additional reasons why he and many of his kin were keen to leave Wessex. Although Boniface characterised himself as *exul Germanicus*,[100] after a few years he was far from being a solitary exile cut off from kith and kin, for many relatives and countrymen had joined him, re-creating the networks that had been mutually supportive in Wessex.[101]

6 Conclusion

When Pope Gregory II and Boniface (then still Wynfrith) had their lengthy discussions in Rome in 718,[102] the pope would have discovered someone who was ideally equipped to organize the church in other parts of Germania. Although the renamed Boniface, like other Anglo-Saxons who journeyed overseas (one thinks, for example of Alcuin), was stimulated by the change and new experiences, and came to see his homeland in a new and more critical light, his promotion by Pope Gregory II likely owed much in the first place to his insular background and its cultural resonances. When he was joined by family members and others from the West Saxon church, the standards of his homeland would have been reinforced.

Therefore, to understand the career of Boniface we must try to understand his earlier experiences as Wynfrith that he would have carried with him and that would have formed part of his core beliefs. Boniface came from an aristocratic cadre where domination and correction of an "errant" British church were part and parcel of the wider picture of West Saxon expansion and appropriation of British-held territory. He would have a natural reaction to and suspicion against church customs that varied from what he considered to be the norm, and an expectation that people who practised them were inferior and suspect. Battling with such problems provided a new type of heroic lustre for the nascent Anglo-Saxon clerical elite, and Latin learning gave them their own exclusive culture, albeit one which still referenced older elite traditions.[103] Anglo-Saxon minsters were intimately linked with the lives of the noble families from whose ranks their inmates were recruited, and we can expect

100 Tangl, no. 30.

101 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, 2nd ed. (Mainz: 1997).

102 Willibald *VB*, c. 5, 18–22.

103 Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury*, *passim*.

Boniface to have carried with him much of the outlook inherent in this class of society. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the unusual prominence he gave within his overseas mission to women, a prominence which reflects the major roles they often played in royal and noble families at this time. It is in his need for support from family members, but also in his recognition of responsibilities towards his kin and other West Saxon associates, that we can see both literally and symbolically how much of his West Saxon background Boniface took with him when he journeyed overseas.

CHAPTER 3

Boniface's Missionary Circles and Networks

James T. Palmer

1 Introduction

The career of Boniface was shaped by an international assortment of overlapping social networks. For a man who can seem in so many ways to have been frustrated in his work – by limited prospects in Wessex, by Gallo-Frankish potentates indifferent to his plans, by backsliding recent converts, by changing papal politics – Boniface is remarkable for the ways in which he moved with relative ease between English, Frankish, German, Lombard, and papal environments.[1] Existing connections between his patrons facilitated this movement, as did sufficient overlap between various cultural norms and languages (both Latin and Germanic). There was still plenty of parochialism as each region generated its own "micro-Christendom," a local version of Christian universality, but the vitality of Boniface's networks is testament to the potential for activities and ideas to transcend the political, cultural, and ethnic boundaries which so often frame the way the early Middle Ages is understood now.[2] In order to understand Boniface's career and influence, it is necessary to see the saint as a networked figure, not just as an individual working in many different environments. This has particular implications for how Boniface's work can be understood, as it unfolded as both missionary and reforming enterprise, governed by both religious ideals and practical political necessities.

The subject of early medieval networks is not new. Hans-Werner Goetz published an important article in 1999 analysing the significance of nurturing friendships in long-distance communications through letters, while the more ritualized side of gift exchange within these communications has recently been explored by John-Henry Clay.[3] These studies highlight the formalized

1 See Lutz E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich: 2003), esp. 116–18, for the interpretation of Boniface as a frustrated figure.

2 For "micro-Christendoms" see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: 2013), 15. It may also be useful to think in terms of individual "cultural clusters" in which everyone is only ever a partial participant in a culture: Paul E. Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mustache and other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (London: 2005), xiii-xiv.

3 Hans-Werner Goetz, "*Beatus homo qui invenit amicum*: The Concept of Friendship in Early Medieval Letters of the Anglo-Saxon Tradition on the Continent," in *Friendship in Medieval*

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language and performance which assisted in shaping and resourcing the activities of Boniface's circle.[4] Familial and social connections laid the foundations for these exchanges, particularly with Wessex and Mercia, as studies by McKitterick, von Padberg, and Yorke have shown.[5] Many involved in the Bonifatian enterprise travelled precisely because of the vitality of these long-distance links between individuals and communities. Indeed, a central pillar of their missionary and reform-centred work was shared collective responsibility, often reinforced by familial ties. This was complemented by overlapping networks of intellectual exchange which more readily stepped beyond personal connections, as well as by institutionally-framed communication such as that between the pope and bishops. There were, to be sure, conflicts of interest and attitude which shaped the course of mission, particularly on account of the involvement of Frankish and English polities with different agendas.[6] Competing networks at a local level also affected what could and could not be achieved. The ways in which Boniface positioned himself in relation to all these pressures are crucial to the understanding of his career.

A shift from studying actors and regions to studying networks enables us to capture a fuller impression of the work involved in mission and what made it possible. There is almost certainly not sufficient complete data to enable anything close to a full-scale network analysis. Even the 150 letters compiled by Tangl as the *Briefe des Bonifatius und Lullus* represent only one contestable

Europe, ed. Julian Haseldine (Stroud: 1999), 124–36; John-Henry Clay, "Gift-Giving and Books in the Letters of St Boniface and Lul," *Journal of Medieval History* 35, no. 4 (2009), 313–25. Some of the issues involved are usefully framed in Sita Steckel, *Kulturen des Lehrens im Früh- und Hochmittelalter: Autorität, Wissenskonzepte und Netzwerke von Gelehrten* (Cologne: 2011), esp. 242–52.

4 See also here Christine Fell, "Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, eds. Helen Damico and Alexandra H. Olsen (Bloomington, IN: 1990), 29–43; Andy Orchard, "Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface," *ASE* 30 (2001), 15–28, and James T. Palmer, "The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Reform," *EME* 13, no. 3 (2005), 249–76.

5 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie: Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, 2nd ed. (Mainz: 1997), and *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995), 81–85; Barbara Yorke, "The Bonifatian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex," *EME* 7, no. 2 (1998), 145–72; Cordula Nolte, "Peregrinatio–Freundschaft–Verwandtschaft: Bonifatius im Austausch mit angelsächsischen Frauen," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 149–60.

6 James T. Palmer, "Beyond Frankish Authority?: Frisia and Saxony between the Anglo-Saxons and the Carolingians," in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, eds. Hans Sauer and Joanna Story (Tempe: 2011), 139–62.

modern reconstruction of a partial collection mediated by three different and selective early medieval compilations.[7] Many letters have been lost; a couple of letters which could be added to the corpus have been proposed.[8] Some letters within the collection do not seem to have much to do with Boniface or Lull.[9] To complement the evidence of the letters, one can turn to hagiographical stories and to the circulation of manuscripts. But this evidence is no more complete and certainly no less contestable than that of the letters. Such concerns mean that any analysis based on quantitative methods will only ever be talking about an arbitrary partial snapshot, so qualitative methods remain crucial, if still imperfect. Method should, of course, be driven by the questions asked. In this situation these should include (in no particular order): How united were members of Boniface's networks in what they hoped to achieve? In what sense, if any, was there any consciousness of social cohesion? How did cultural differences within these networks shape Boniface's work? Did connections have multiple functions? On what was the strength or weakness of connections based? What differences were there in long-distance and local connections?

Thinking in terms of networks helps to expand the increasingly complex understanding of early medieval mission. Histories and hagiographies tend to represent conversion as a simplified set-piece moment, in which a group accepts Christianity after some sort of confrontation.[10] Boniface provides a case in point, as his hagiographer claimed that he converted many Hessians simply by felling the sacred Oak of Jupiter.[11] The ways in which these stories intersect with literary forms and memorial practices tell us much about the role of mission as part of a wider spectrum of social processes, both during and after the moment of conversion.[12] Indeed, conversion and Christianization are much better understood now as collections of events and processes shaped by a

7 For additional detail about the Boniface correspondence, see Chapter 6 in this volume.

8 Klemens Honselmann, "Der Briefe Gregors III. an Bonifatius über die Sachsenmission," *Historisches Jahurbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 76 (1957), 83–106; Heinrich Wagner, "Ein Schutzbrief des Hausmeiers Karlmann für Bonifatius," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 67 (2011), 99–108.

9 Tangl, nos. 1–8 and nos. 143–50.

10 For a good modern narrative see Richard Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371–1386 AD* (London: 1997).

11 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 31.

12 See especially Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow: 2001) and James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (Turnhout: 2009). On early medieval hagiography and social processes more generally in the Frankish kingdoms see Jamie Kreiner, *The Social Life of Hagiography in the Merovingian Kingdom* (Cambridge: 2014).

multiplicity of social institutions, traditions, and practicalities.[13] Attention to sociological models of conversion, often with reference to modern African missions, have helped to clarify the kinds of processes involved in conversion, such as the slow-drip mutation of "acculturation."[14] Comparative studies, most recently stimulated by Roy Flechner and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh's *Converting the Isles* project, have played an important role here too by exposing important similarities and differences.[15] Collectively, the attention afforded to early medieval mission has shown that conversion was more than an event or even a process; rather, it was the confluence of multiple discourses on belief, society, identity, morality, mortality, and politics.[16]

2 Paving the Way for Mission

Early medieval missionary impulses grew out of a range of social and cultural interactions. Apparently, there was little interest in systematic evangelization beyond old imperial frontiers in the West until after the Empire had ceased to be a going concern. Most accounts therefore emphasize the success of Christian communities in non-Roman Ireland as one major factor in fostering a new proactive and universalistic attitude, combining with the broader and inclusive vision of Christendom in the thought of Pope Gregory the Great

13 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: 2003); Bruno Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe: Conversion et liberté dans les royaumes barbares, V^e–VIIIe siècles* (Paris: 2005); Daniel König, *Bekehrungsmotive: Untersuchungen zum Christianisierungsprozess im römischen Westreich und seinen romanisch-germanischen Nachfolgern (4.–8. Jahrhundert)* (Husum: 2008).

14 Michael Richter, "Models of Conversion in the Early Middle Ages," in *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Doris Edel (Dublin: 1995), 116–28.

15 *The Introduction of Christianity into the Early Medieval Insular World*, eds. Roy Flechner and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh (Brepols: 2016). Classic comparative studies include Clare Stancliffe, "Kings and Conversion: Some Comparisons between the Roman Mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 14 (1980), 59–94; Arnold Angenendt, "The Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons Considered against the Background of the Early Medieval Mission," in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo (1986), 747–81; and Henry Mayr-Harting, "Two Conversions: The Bulgarians and the Anglo-Saxons," Stenton Lecture 1993 (Reading: 1994).

16 James T. Palmer, "The Otherness of Non-Christians in the Early Middle Ages," *Studies in Church History* 51 (2015), 33–52.

(590–604).[17] These ideas converged most successfully in "frontier" zones, most obviously in the English kingdoms with the most direct debts both to Irish and Gregorian thought, and also in northernmost Gaul, where the rapid development of monasticism in the 7th century re-energized old Christian communities within striking distance of actual pagan communities north and east of the Rhine.[18] Connections between these zones were facilitated by both long-standing and developing North Sea trade networks, as well as individual personal and political connections.[19] Migration – and here, given trade, we might imagine short-term or short-distance movements in addition to any large-scale population movements – also promoted interconnectivity.

In many ways, then, Boniface's mission grew out of social networks which were already exploring the potential for evangelization in Northern Europe. Most modern histories of mission in the period will relate the story of Wilfrid of York's unintentional missionary break in Frisia as a starting point, when the controversial bishop stopped in the region on the way to Rome in 678 and allegedly impressed pagans by teaching them to fish.[20] This is followed by reports that Ecgberht of Rath Melsigi, an Englishman who had fled to Ireland to escape plague, had plans to evangelize the inhabitants of Germania, although stormy seas prevented him from actually travelling there.[21] From these interconnected Northumbrian, Irish, and North Sea groups emerged St Willibrord, a man apparently charismatic enough to attract easily the patronage of the

17 Wolfgang Fritze, "Universalis gentium confessio: Formeln, Träger und Wege universalmissionarischen Denkens im 7. Jahrhundert," *Frümittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), 78–130; Friedrich Prinz, "Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission," in *Die Kirche des frühen Mittelalters*, I, ed. Knut Schäferdiek, Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte, 2, no. 1 (Munich: 1978), 445–65.

18 On the social background see Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert,* 2nd ed. (Munich: 1972) and Yaniv Fox, *Power and Religion in Merovingian Gaul: Columbanian Monasticism and the Frankish Elites* (Cambridge: 2014).

19 Ian Wood, *The Merovingian North Sea* (Alingsås: 1983); Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs Frisons du haut Moyen Âge*, 2 vols (Lille: 1983). The importance of long-distance trade in the period is emphasized repeatedly in Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce AD 300–900* (Cambridge: 2000).

20 Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: 1946), 49–53; Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas*, 2nd ed. (Darmstadt: 1972), 96–97; Arnold Angenendt, "'Er war der erste…': Willibrords historische Stellung" in *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, eds. Petronella Bange and Anton Gerard Weiler (Nijmegen: 1990), 13–34; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, 198; James T. Palmer, "Wilfrid and the Frisians," in *St Wilfrid: Abbot, Bishop, Saint*, ed. Nicholas Higham (Donington: 2013), 231–42.

21 Bede, *HE*, V, c. 9–10, 474–85.

powerful Frankish duke Pippin II (d. 714) and, from there, the support of Pope Sergius (687–701) specifically for missionary work.[22] Finding links to Boniface's formative influences is not difficult within these circles. Archbishop Berhtwald of Canterbury (692–731) provides one prominent link: he received the *pallium* from Sergius, was consecrated in the Frankish kingdom, and presided over a church council attended by Boniface.[23] Another point of contact was with Aldhelm of Malmesbury (d. 709), who knew people within Wilfrid's networks and who shared with Boniface a deep interest in the foundational stories of ancient saints.[24] It should not be surprising that Willibrordian networks attracted a figure from a southern English polity when they appear so rooted in Northumbria, Ireland, and Francia.

The relationship between Willibrord and Boniface itself seems both crucial to what would follow and difficult to pin down precisely. Boniface potentially first met his Northumbrian colleague in Frisia in 716 but, if so, it was during a period of intense conflict between Frankish potentates – including the pagan duke of Frisia – over the succession to Pippin II as mayor of the palace.[25] In that conflict, Willibrord sided with the eventual winner, Charles Martel, who immediately set about suppressing opposition in the North in a conflict which was later remembered as an effort to suppress paganism.[26] Boniface returned to the region during this period of Pippinid consolidation, when Charles was particularly active in securing the Saxon frontier too.[27] At this point Willibrord had, through the Pippinid monastic foundation of Echternach near Trier,

22 A.H. van Berkum, "Willibrord en Wilfried: Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen," *Sacris Erudiri* 23 (1978), 347–415. For biographical studies of Willibrord see Camillus Wampach, *Willibrord: Sein Leben und Lebenswerk* (Luxembourg: 1953) and Anton G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum: 1989). A much-needed new study is promised by Yitzhak Hen and Rob Meens.

23 Bede, *HE*, V, c. 8 and c. 11; Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, c. 4, 14; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 52.

24 Sarah Foot, "Wilfrid's Monastic Empire," in *St Wilfrid*, 27–28; Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994). On Aldhelm on saints see now George Dempsey, *Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Ending of Late Antiquity* (Turnhout: 2015), but I remain more convinced by the interpretations given by Michael Lapidge in *The Prose Works of Aldhelm* (Woodbridge: 1979).

25 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 16–17 makes no reference to Boniface meeting Willibrord during his first visit to Frisia in 716.

26 Richard Gerberding, "716: A Crucial Year for Charles Martel," in *Karl Martel in seiner Zeit*, 205–16; Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: 2000), 58–64; Andreas Fischer, *Karl Martell: Der Beginn karolingischer Herrschaft* (Stuttgart: 2012), 53–54.

27 *Annales Laureshamenses*, s.a. 718 and s.a. 720, and *Annales Alamannici*, s.a. 718 and s.a. 720, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 1 (Hanover: 1826), 24; *Annales s. Amandi*, s.a. 718 and s.a. 720 and *Annales Tiliani*, s.a. 718 and s.a. 720, ed. Pertz, MGH SS 1, 6. On Charles' Saxon campaigns see Fischer, *Karl Martell*, 79–85.

attracted significant landholdings, stretching from Toxandria to the semi-autonomous region of Thuringia.[28] By entering the entourage of Willibrord between 719 and 722, Boniface was joining a powerful world of interlocking "lordships" which paved the way for him to receive the political and material backing for his own missionary enterprises between the Main and the Saxon frontier. Frustratingly, however, almost all we know about Boniface's engagement with this world at this point is that he decided not to restrict himself to working under Willibrord – a move for which the only near-contemporary explanation given is that Boniface wanted to pursue a papal commission to investigate the possibility for the conversion of Germania.[29]

Boniface's social connections with other local groups hint at a complex political-cultural environment.[30] It was in the early phase of Boniface's Continental career that he was said to have taken a young boy named Gregory as his own disciple after a chance meeting at the convent of Pfalzel, on the Moselle just north of Trier. Gregory impressed Boniface by reciting parts of the Bible he had recently learned at the palace school, but Boniface felt compelled to educate the boy when it became apparent he did not understand what the passages meant.[31] Connections with Pfalzel tapped further into Willibrord's social environment, as he benefited from the support of successive bishops of Trier.[32] There may have been further English connections, too, as the extended Bonifatian correspondence includes a letter from Abbess Ælfled of Whitby to Abbess Adela of Pfalzel, Gregory's grandmother, in support of a pilgrim heading to Rome.[33] Boniface's connections with the nobility of Trier did not always serve him well, however: he clashed with Bishop Milo over perceptions of proper conduct, while Gregory was later barred from succeeding Boniface because his brother had killed "an uncle of the duke of the Franks."[34] One wonders whether Boniface's attacks on the behaviour of Bishop Gewilib of Mainz paved the way for a happy working environment in that metropolis either, when later

28 Marios Costambeys, "An Aristocratic Community on the Northern Frankish Frontier 690–726," *EME* 3, no. 1 (1994), 39–62; Fischer, *Karl Martell*, 106–10.

29 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 24–26. The relationship between Willibrord and Boniface is discussed (as a bit suspicious) in Franz Flaskamp, "Wilbrord-Clemens und Wynfrith-Bonifatius," in *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundersten Todestag* (Fulda: 1954), 157–72, and Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 118–19.

30 Stuart Airlie, "The Frankish Aristocracy as Supporters and Opponents of Boniface," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 255–70.

31 Liudger, *VG*, c. 2, 67–68.

32 Matthias Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger: Die Verwandtschaft Irminas von Oeren und Adelas von Pfalzel* (Sigmaringen: 1982).

33 Tangl, no. 8, 3–4.

34 Tangl, no. 50, 83.

they seemed to be hoisted on him by his opponents when he had wanted control of Cologne.[35] Gregory's hagiographer, Liudger, even reported rumours that some people at the Frankish court had wished to murder Boniface.[36] The saint's connections to the Frankish nobility gave him an uncertain position within the social worlds of Austrasia and Germania more generally, but he still obtained sufficient support to pursue his work.

Boniface's overlapping but different networks affected his strategies for pursuing missionary work. One of the most famous letters in the Bonifatian correspondence contains Bishop Daniel of Winchester's advice to his former mentee on how to win pagans over to the faith through reasoned argument.[37] It seems unlikely that Daniel had any practical missionary experience, and certainly not in Germany – his was advice which represented the considered theorization of mission at distance. But Boniface also knew from *passiones martyrum* that confrontation was a stock part of many good conversion narratives.[38] In between these two positions, a wealth of local knowledge and political sensitivity shaped his work, and not least the self-imposed pressure to ensure that he moulded communities which adhered to canonical practices. Mission to pagans and reform of the Frankish Church were part of the same project.[39] To be a missionary was to be at the centre of a complex web of competing pressures.

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35 Tangl, no. 60, 124. On the conflict with Mainz see Eugen Ewig, "Milo et eiusmodi similes," in *Sankt Bonifatius*, 413 and 421–22, with a more positive view in Franz Staab, "*Rudi populo rudis adhuc presul*: Zu den wehrhaften Bischöfen der Zeit Karl Martells," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, 249–73. Boniface receiving Mainz in controversial circumstances is recorded in Tangl, no. 80, 179–80, discussed in Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 229–32. A frosty reception for the missionaries in Mainz is suggested in Palmer, "Bishop Lull," 260.

36 Liudger, *VG*, c. 4, 71. See also J.P. Kern, *Zum Tode des hl. Bonifatius: Theologie und Glaube*, 1989, 301–21, on the suspicion of a Carolingian conspiracy to murder Boniface.

37 Tangl, no. 23, 38–41. On this letter see von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung*, 322–27.

38 On the relationship between stories of martyrdom and mission, see James T. Palmer, "Martyrdom and the Rise of Missionary Hagiography in the Late Merovingian World," in *The Introduction of Christianity*, 157–80.

39 Timothy Reuter, "Saint Boniface and Europe," in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Saint Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 79–80. Reform here is meant in terms of "correction." On the dangers of anachronism see Theodor Schieffer, "Angelsachsen und Franken: Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden: 1951), 1434–435; Timothy Reuter, "'Kirchenreform' und 'Kirchenpolitik' im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirchlichkeit," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, 39–40, and, inspired by these discussions, Julia Barrow, "Ideas and Applications of Reform," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3, eds. Thomas Noble and Julia Smith (Cambridge: 2008), 345–62.

In this environment, there were necessarily multiple centres for the networks where different ideas came together. Boniface was himself one central point – the roving charismatic figure, whose power of personality ensured that connections were made and maintained. His direct involvement in the mission field as a preacher, agitator, and politician was fundamental to the initial successes in Hessia and Thuringia. Over time, however, the Bonifatian focus had to be institutionalized and built into the new local Christian infrastructure. The semi-monastic church at Fritzlar, for instance, may have stood as a beacon of Bonifatian triumph in the landscape, as it stood close to the site of the felled Oak of Jupiter.[40] Fulda, deep in the woods, became the representative of Boniface's ascetic ideals, imposed on the site of a former villa.[41] The flagship diocese at Würzburg commanded ecclesiastical authority at the symbolic former centre of power of the recently undermined dukes of Thuringia.[42] The authority of the new Christian culture was written into the landscape of the old.[43]

3 Resourcing Mission

A significant function of Boniface's networks was to provide resources for his missionary work. Mission stations are often almost by definition in a perilous situation because they operate in areas in which people are not (yet) interested in giving money and food to a new religion to which they do not belong. Significant investment from external sources, such as well-endowed churches and wealthy people, was essential.[44] It is also hard to maintain the flow of such resources as politics and personnel change, which explains why the longer the conversion and Christianization of Saxony took, the harder it seemed to be for the church in the region to flourish. For Boniface's mission, at least, the work of

40 In Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 31–32 it is claimed that Boniface built a small oratory using the wood from the oak, and this has been proposed as the predecessor to the church at Fritzlar: Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 148, and von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, 41. John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 202–03 wisely urges caution about the association.

41 Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda c.744–900* (Cambridge: 2012), 28–30.

42 The symbolic importance of Würzburg is best signalled in the *Passio Kiliani*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 5 (Hanover: 1910), 722–28.

43 For Hessia, these issues are explored at length in Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, and in Clay's contribution to this volume.

44 Jane Stevenson, "Christianising the Northern Barbarians," in *Nordsjøn: Handel, Religion og Politikk,* eds. J.F. Krøger and H.-R. Nale (Stavanger: 1996), 162–84.

evangelization and Christianization was entwined with Frankish and papal expansion into the north, which ensured ongoing support.

It is worth pausing to consider what Boniface and his circle needed for their work. From the Bonifatian correspondence and contemporary lists of priestly necessities we know that they would have needed a full complement of books to help structure and perform the liturgy, from a calendar and Easter table to a missal.[45] They would also have needed material for baptismal and penitential rites, as well as sermons.[46] They would have needed access to biblical texts for preaching and education, and they would have acquired patristic treatises and histories to assist with these projects. Books were expensive items, of course, as a single manuscript could demand hundreds of cows or sheep which partly explains, with the decline in access to papyrus in the West, the widespread re-use of parchment.[47] Boniface was undoubtedly reliant here primarily on externally-sourced books for his work, rather than on local resources. We have three extant manuscripts associated with the Englishman's circle: a 6th-century copy of the New Testament originally made for Victor of Capua, an 8th-century copy of a variety of letters and treatises in a minuscule associated with Luxeuil, and an 8th-century copy of the Gospels in an Irish script.[48] Boniface also wrote to centres in England requesting copies of books, including works by Bede (d. 735) and a copy of the epistles of Peter written in gold to impress

45 von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung*, 87–98. For a detailed 8th-century list see *Excarpsum de canonibus catholicorum partum*, eds. Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, in *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 3 (Oxford: 1871), 417: "psalterium, lectionarium, antefonarium, missalem, baptisterium, martyr[o]logium, in anno circuli ad predictionem cum bonis operibus, et compotum et ciclo." Yitzhak Hen, "Missionaries and Liturgy," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 341–52, particularly noting important possible liturgical differences between Boniface and Willibrord.

46 On penitentials and sermons in the mission see Rob Meens's contribution to this volume.

47 Émile Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 4 (Lille: 1938), 325–32; David Ganz, "Mass Production of Early Medieval Manuscripts: The Carolingian Bibles from Tours," in *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration and Use*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: 1994), 55, estimates it took the hides of between 210 and 225 sheep to make a full Tours Bible with pages measuring 480×375 mm.

48 Hermann Schüling, "Die Handbibliothek des Bonifatius: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 4 (1962), 285–348; *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*, eds. Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Werner Stork (Fulda: 1996); Michel Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife: How the Ragyndrudis Codex Came to Be a *Vita Bonifatii*," *The Heroic Age* 10 (2007). Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 1 (the Victor Codex; CLA, 1196) is now online (http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325289808/1/LOG_0000/) as is Fulda, Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 3 (the Cadmug Codex; CLA, 1198; http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325292043/1/LOG_0000/).

the carnally minded.[49] The acquisition of books was important to Boniface's work because it supported liturgical activity and helped to prove the wealth which lay behind Christianity.

The exchange of books taps into a wider culture of gift exchange. This has been explored recently in an article by John-Henry Clay, who has outlined the possibility of distinct "ritualized discourses" in the Bonifatian correspondence, one privileging economic value (when spices, hawks, and towels are involved), and another privileging symbolic worth (when holy books are involved).[50] This distinction may rest on perspective, as both discourses involve obligation and reciprocity which generate bonds of collaboration between those involved. One might look here too at Arnold Angenendt's application of the model of gift exchange to illuminate donations *pro anima* in the early Middle Ages.[51] Indeed, these requests are indicative of broader resourcing affected by the ritual economy: noble families became keen to support Boniface's circle in the Middle Rhine valley through the donation of vineyards *pro anima*, but also to provide wine for the celebration of the Eucharist.[52] The liturgical and gift-based discourses encouraged people, religious and lay, to participate in what they saw as the correct running of a Christian society. The *quid pro quo* in such a situation could be somewhat complex, as it depends on the meeting of a variety of practical and idealistic agendas simultaneously.

The long-distance transmission of resources included the movement of people. Without preachers, without good religious people of both genders to provide good examples of Christian living, the prospects for success were slight.[53] The role of family, reimagined within a religious context, was important.[54] Leoba, the first abbess of Tauberbischofsheim, was recruited for her post partly because Boniface was related to her mother, a fact she reminded

49 Tangl, no. 30 and no. 35 (epistles of Peter).

50 Clay, "Gift-Giving," 320–25. For references to gifts, see the following letters in Tangl's edition of the Boniface correspondence: Spices: nos. 49, 62, 84–85, 90; Hunting birds: nos. 69, 105; Towels: nos. 32, 63, 72, 75, 90; and Books: nos. 27, 30, 35, 63, 75, 76, 91, 116, 126, 127.

51 Arnold Angenendt, "Gift and Countergift in the Early Medieval Liturgy," in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, eds. Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick (Aldershot: 2008), 131–52.

52 Franz Staab, "Bonifatius, die '*regula sancti patris Benedicti*' und die Gründung des Klosters Fulda," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 55–69.

53 Yitzhak Hen, "*Milites Christi utriusque sexus*: Gender and the Politics of Conversion in the Circle of Boniface," *Revue bénédictine* 109, nos. 1–2 (1999), 17–31.

54 von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 89–90. Nolte, "*Peregrinatio*," 158–59 notes that Boniface's friendship with female correspondents was almost always rooted in friendship with men. On the women in Boniface's circles see Lifshitz's contribution to this volume.

Boniface of in a letter before she travelled to Germany.[55] Boniface needed people he could trust. He was probably lucky that the English siblings Wynnebald, Willibald, and Walburga joined his team in Bavaria to work together, something which may have surprised the siblings themselves given that Willibald turned up after a decade spent in Monte Cassino and a number of occasionally troubled years sightseeing in the Holy Land. But sometimes it was non-familial connections which were important. Willibald had been directed north by Boniface's friend Pope Gregory III.[56] Lull, a Mercian, seems only to have been drawn into the mission after visiting Rome on pilgrimage and falling ill, which delayed his departure until he had met Boniface.[57] The number of recruits from overseas was significant enough that Boniface, shortly before his death, felt compelled to write to Fulrad of Saint-Denis as advisor at the freshly-minted Carolingian court to ensure that his disciples (*discipuli*) had appropriate legal protection.[58] To recruit for a mission involved a range of institutional factors regardless of what the personal nature of a connection was.

4 The Power of Prayer

A telling indication of the complexity of the web of exchanges involved in supporting the mission is the development of bonds based on prayer.[59] In the late 730s, Boniface sent a famous letter to all those engaged in religious service in the English kingdoms, beseeching them to pray for the pagan Saxons so that they might yet accept the Catholic faith.[60] He did not, in this letter, request material support of any kind. The efficacy of prayer had long been on the agenda, as debates about how people could be absolved of smaller sins show.[61] Through prayer and the mercy of God, the burden of smaller sins could be

55 Tangl, no. 29, 52–53.

56 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5, 104.

57 Tangl, no. 98, 219.

58 Tangl, no. 93, 213.

59 Adalbert Ebner, *Die klösterlichen Gebets-Verbrüderungen bis zum Ausgang des karolingischen Zeitalters* (Regensburg: 1890); *Memoria: Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, eds. Karl Schmid and Joachim Wollasch (Munich: 1984); *The Durham "Liber Vitae" and its Context*, eds. David Rollason, A.J. Piper, and Margaret Harvey (Woodbridge: 2004). The term "the power of prayer" is taken from Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II: c.700–c.900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: 1995), 622–53.

60 Tangl, no. 46, 74–75.

61 See Peter Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: 2015).

alleviated: this was central to the worldview of Christians as expressed through the daily liturgy. The idea that the Saxons could be converted through such intervention had many parallels, including calls for peace and victory in the liturgy during times of conflict.[62] Hearts could be changed.

Commemoration was crucial to keeping the mission going.[63] While Boniface did not explicitly ask for material support, it was a natural extension of prayer in this context. Boniface stressed the perceived ancestral bond between the English and the Saxons precisely to re-create an emotional bond of obligation which had so moved him and others since Ecgberht of Rath Melsigi had first suggested it. Bishop Torthelm of Leicester, in the only direct response preserved, promised to support Boniface with prayers, but he also sent a "little gift" (*munusculum*) as a token of affection.[64] Exactly what this gift was is unknown, but Torthelm's actions at least point to the role that commemoration could play in obtaining things. After Boniface's death, Lull was no less assiduous in sending messengers to political centres across the Channel to keep mission on the spiritual agenda.[65] Commemoration worked, too, as it helped to inspire the next generation of English missionaries to the Continent, notably Aluberht, first bishop of the Old Saxons, and Willehad, the Northumbrian first bishop of Bremen.[66] There is no indication that it was the circulation of hagiographies which kept the story of the missions alive, as it was on the Continent, so we must give prayer networks an important role here.

The spiritual benefits of prayer exchanges are suggested by Boniface's efforts to form a bond between the new foundation of Fulda in Hessia and the Beneventan monastery of Monte Cassino, a beacon for Benedictine monastic discipline. Social networks helped to facilitate this connection, as Pope Gregory III had directed the English monk Willibald into Boniface's circle after a decade in which Willibald had apparently excelled at helping Abbot Petronax to reform Monte Cassino.[67] Boniface wrote to the new abbot, Optatus: "we earnestly pray that there may be between us an intimate tie of brotherly love with common prayer for the living and, for those who have passed from this life, prayers and celebration of Masses, the names of the dead being mutually

62 Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: 1986), 344–61.

63 von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, 85.

64 Tangl, no. 47, 76.

65 Tangl, nos 121 and 122; Palmer, "Bishop Lull," 268–73.

66 Altfrid, *VLger*, I, c. 10, 15–16; *VWhad*, c. 2, 843. Joanna Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c.750–870* (Aldershot: 2003), 53–54; Palmer, "Beyond Frankish Authority," 145–47.

67 Hygeburg, *VWill*, cc. 4–5, 102–04; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 188–90.

exchanged."[68] The point was to create a single community of Christians in prayer where there was distance and fragmentation in the lived world. Boniface was more explicit in this letter than elsewhere about the sense of obligation that this brought with it: on account of this bond, his people would feel happier to comply with the wishes of Benedict's former house, just as he was sure Optatus's people would look favourably upon them. Evidence that this was the beginning of a close relationship is sadly lacking; the regular exchange of names, however, became a cornerstone of strategies used by the monks of Fulda to generate an expanded sense of camaraderie amongst East Frankish foundations.[69]

The importance of networks of commemoration brings us back to the practical problems faced by missionary enterprises. Expansion and consolidation, including activities of mission and Christianization, were practical necessities on frontiers in ways which they simply were not in longer established centres away from the borders of Christendom. Also, the creation of new centres on the frontiers required new habits of interaction to be developed, because there was no compulsion for older centres to interact with newer ones far away. In order to keep missionary work supported, those involved needed to maximize the utility of their personal connections, and to establish bonds which readily perpetuated memory of the enterprise. From such a perspective, one can see why Boniface targeted liturgical practices in distant English kingdoms and Benevento to keep support for his ventures in Germany alive: it was an active way of encouraging people in new and more established centres to give each other the moral and material support they needed.

5 Local Cliques and Infiltration

At a local level, oral communication no doubt dominated over letter-writing. Nevertheless, writing remained important: even a journey from Mainz to Erfurt meant 300 km through heavily wooded and often challenging terrain, so we cannot expect that communication relied on regular face-to-face interaction,

68 Tangl, no. 106: "Diligenter quoque deprecamur, ut familiaritas fraternae caritatis inter nos sit et pro viventibus oratio commonis et pro migrantibus de hoc saeculo orationes et missarum sollemnia celebrentur, cum alternatim nomina defunctorum inter nos mittantur."

69 Richard Corradini, "The Rhetoric of Crisis: Computus and *Liber annalis* in Early Ninth-Century Fulda," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, eds. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: 2003), 269–321; Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda*, especially chs 6 and 8.

especially as Boniface aged (he was perhaps into his 60s with failing eyesight when he pushed to establish Erfurt and Buraburg as bishoprics in the early 740s).[70] There may well have been many more letters, possibly on wax tablets and of a more practical nature, than scribes chose to preserve in the manuscript collections. Indeed, most of the short-distance communications were only added to the third and latest of the early medieval collections in manuscript, suggesting that they had been passed over – however they were stored – by whoever compiled the first two, as they focused more squarely on Boniface, popes, and politics.[71] Many aspects of local politics and organisation on the mission frontier will remain lost to modern historians.

The local letters that survive reveal some details about the practicalities of arranging life in the frontier zone. The most bureaucratic example is an uncharacteristically blunt letter by Boniface which outlines the roles to be taken up by the brothers at the monastery of Fritzlar following the death of Abbot of Wigbert.[72] The necessity of writing the letter speaks volumes about the difficulties posed by the absence of an ongoing organizational tradition. It also says something about the power of written communication to help fill that gap, especially if one imagines Boniface could have given verbal instructions to the same effect. But letters still fulfilled the need to build bonds locally on the basis of intellectual and emotional connections. Lull once wrote Boniface a long and elaborate letter, concluding with a poem, begging the bishop to let him stay in Thuringia for the purposes of study.[73] The letter suggests some success in developing some kind of intellectual culture in the region, while reminding us that short-distance letters could still be a strategy of persuasion within communication. These letters also helped spiritual bonds to be maintained when geography and monastic walls were an obstacle, as shown by Lull writing to Leoba – then only a relatively short distance away in Tauberbischofsheim – reminding her of his affection for her and asking her to send word of anything she might need with the deacon Gundwin.[74] In these letters it is possible to see relatively short-distance communication fulfilling the same functions as longer-distance communications.

Solidarity and internal organization were essential for the wider project of extending Christianity in the region. An important part of the social networks

70 Boniface refers to his failing eyesight in Tangl, no. 63, 131 when requesting Bishop Daniel of Winchester to send him a copy of the prophets written in unabbreviated half uncial.

71 For descriptions of the three collections and comparisons of their contents, see Tangl, *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, vi-xxv.

72 Tangl, no. 40, 65.

73 Tangl, no. 103, 225–27.

74 Tangl, no. 100, 223.

which made mission work would have been those people who could have facilitated access to the local communities. From the *vita* of Liudger of Münster, written in the 840s by Altfrid, we get at least a retrospective sense of just how important local family connections were for making inroads with the project of evangelization, as Liudger's family had significant landholdings in the mission field and supplied the first "native" Frisian priests.[75] Sturm, the first abbot of Fulda, may also have brought useful local knowledge and connections with him to Hessia given his aristocratic Bavarian background.[76] For Willibrord and Boniface, such cultural brokers and intermediaries must have been crucial. When the two Hewalds travelled from Ireland to attempt to preach in the Rhineland without consent from the local ruler, they were murdered and thrown in the river.[77] Missionaries needed political and social backing, which came from a combination of developing organization and building this organization into the local social environment.

Monasteries played a special role in furthering the penetration of Christianity alongside episcopal churches. There was, by the 8th century, already a long history of monks engaging in the work of evangelization, not least because of their discipline, dedication, and education.[78] Indeed, the distinction between monastic and pastoral institution was less clear-cut in the early Middle Ages than is often assumed.[79] Moreover, the particular nature of monasteries offered useful environments in which bonds between religious and social networks could be formed. This could be through the gifts of land by local families *pro anima*. These bonds could also be developed over time, when members of local families entered the religious life and thus created personal bonds between spiritual and lay communities. The history of Boniface's Fulda is a prime example of these processes in action.[80] The value of a melting pot, where social and political divisions could be dissolved through religion, explains why

75 Altfrid, *VLger*, I, cc. 3–6, 8–11. On Liudger's family and mission see Arnold Angenendt, *Liudger: Missionar–Abt–Bischof im frühen Mittelalter* (Münster: 2005).

76 Wilhelm Störmer, "Eine Adelsgruppe um die Fuldaer Äbte Sturmi und Eigil und den Holzkirchener Klostergründer Troand: Beobachtungen zum bayrisch-alemannisch-ostfränkischen Adel des 8./ 9. Jahrhunderts," in *Gesellschaft und Herrschaft: Forschungen zu sozial- und landesgeschichtelichen Problemen vornehmlich in Bayern*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Munich: 1969), 1–34.

77 Bede, *HE*, V, c. 10.

78 Josef Semmler, "Kloster, Mission und Seelsorge im Frühmittelalter," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 303–26.

79 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*, 146–48.

80 Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community*. On Fulda's landholding and family connections more specifically see Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge: 2000).

Fulda was always considered to be a suitable institution to steer the conversion of the Saxons nearly 200 km away to the north:[81] to be a Saxon educated in Fulda meant the opportunity to step outside local Saxon politics and to engage with wider cultural networks which stretched across Latin Christendom.

Boniface's mission also benefited from what looks like the erosion of older networks. Many of the allegedly new centres associated with him – Fulda, Würzburg, Buraburg, Erfurt – had longer Christian histories than the Bonifatian circles sometimes admitted.[82] Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* made a virtue of these, as he described Boniface tackling a series of tyrants and backsliders whose grip on the region was weakening fast.[83] One can easily read between the lines here and see that old networks focusing on figures such as the dukes of Thuringia were being repurposed by, first, Pippin II and, then, Charles Martel.[84] Duke Heden went from generous supporter of Willibrord early in the century to someone portrayed as a tyrant in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* forty years or so later.[85] Whenever his rule as duke ended, he was not replaced by a new duke.[86] One wonders what this kind of political vacuum meant as bonds of friendship and loyalty were dissolved and rights to land were renegotiated. Such bonds were presumably renegotiated: Heden's gift to Willibrord later turned up as a gift from Pippin III to the monastery of Fulda.[87] In this kind of sociopolitical landscape, Boniface's religious networks represented the very real colonization and restructuring of the world east of the Rhine.

In some respects, Boniface's work was the implementation of other people's expansionist political plans. When Pope Gregory II raised Boniface to the status of bishop, he made clear in letters to the Christians of Germany and Thuringia that the missionary had been sent to them by the apostolic see, thus

81 Eigil, *VS*, c. 23, 158–59.

82 Matthias Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen," in *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Heinz Löwe (Stuttgart: 1982), 231–318; Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, Ch. 4.

83 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 26, 31–33.

84 The situation in Hessia in 721 illustrates this well: see Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 168–76.

85 Charters 8 and 26, ed. Camillus Wampach, *Geschichte der Grundherrschaft Echternach im Frühmittelalter*, vol. 1, Part 2 (Luxembourg: 1930), 27–31 and 63–65. Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 32 and *Passio Kiliani*, c. 14; Hubert Mordek, "Die Hedenen als politische Kraft im austrasischen Frankenreich," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, 346–47; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 100–02.

86 One can compare here how Charlemagne refused to let there be a new duke of Bavaria after the deposition of Tassilo in 788, on which see Stuart Airlie, "Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne's Mastering of Bavaria," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 9 (1999), 93–119.

87 Eigil, *VS*, c. 22, 157.

strengthening the papacy's reach in the north.[88] Charles Martel's support for Boniface in Hessia and Thuringia, like his support of Willibrord in Frisia, seems to have been part of his efforts to increase control over neighbouring territories, particularly with the Saxon frontier being a long-term problem for the Franks.[89] Pippin III, whatever differences there were between his outlook and that of his father, was in no less of a position to ignore the need for conflict on frontiers. But Boniface, like Willibrord, was also freer to foster relationships with local families on his own terms. The relationship between mission and conquest was looser in the first half of the century than it would be later, when Charlemagne forced the Saxons to submit and convert.

In the contexts sketched above, the ideas of mission and conversion can become problematic. The difference between a pagan and someone who just does not live up to particular Christian standards, for instance, can depend on perception – and perception can be informed both by observation of practices and by expectations formed through reading and discussion.[90] The list of superstitions famously associated with Boniface exemplifies this conceptual slipperiness well, with practices which could variously be described as pagan, folkish, generic, or just confused.[91] As Robert Markus observed, many practices may have been acceptable to some priests, but not to Boniface's priests.[92] The political and social dynamics of mission complicate this further because it means that any suite of religious or superstitious practices is interpreted in relation to the affiliations of the observers and the observed. Boniface's "pagans" appeared more pagan precisely because they were not well integrated with Carolingian and papal networks and their ideals. Moreover, the letters and hagiographies always represent the situation in heightened terms designed to be intelligible to literate Christian audiences, not to represent the

88 Tangl, no. 17, 31 and Tangl, no. 19, 33. See also Tangl, no. 12, in which Gregory entrusted the mission to Boniface.

89 Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*, Ch. 4; Fischer, *Karl Martell*, 154–59.

90 James T. Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 402–25.

91 *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 222–23; Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*," in *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie*, ed. Hervé Hasquin (Brussels: 1984), 9–26; Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs* (Freiburg: 2004), 435–36 and 580–99. See especially Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume, Chapter 10.4.

92 Robert Markus, "From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and Paganism in Gaul," in *The Seventh Century: Changes and Continuity*, eds. Jacques Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (London: 1992), 166–68.

accurate situation on the ground. All the ideals of mission, conversion, and Christianization – Boniface's and ours – are culturally mediated and contingent concepts.

6 Networks of Hagiography

Much of the above discussion of networks skirts around an important issue with Boniface: the centrality of hagiography to our understanding of him.[93] Groups had used hagiographies extensively before to reinforce networks and to give them a sense of identity. The example *par excellence* here is Jonas of Bobbio's *Vita Columbani et eius socii*, written around 640.[94] In that work, Jonas set out the story of how Irishman Columbanus (d. 615) built up new standards for moral behaviour in Burgundy through his foundations at Luxeuil and Annegray, setting himself against the circles of Brunhild in the process.[95] After a surprisingly brief account of Columbanus's death in exile at Bobbio in Lombardy, Jonas sketched an entire second book of stories, highlighting how various figures at Luxeuil, Bobbio, and Faremoutiers had extended the saint's work. There was more than a little sleight-of-hand in Jonas's work, as he accentuated and suppressed a number of issues so that the story represented values of the Columbanian network ca. 640 rather than some of the more controversial aspects of Columbanus's own story such as his condemnation by bishops over Easter calculations. The reshaping of the past helped to align the cultural practices and ideals of linked communities in Jonas's present. The same, of course, can be said about Boniface.

After his martyrdom, Boniface's work was quickly reinterpreted through the prism of hagiography.[96] Letters and charters show that contemporaries almost immediately hailed him as a saint in clichéd terms.[97] The Englishman Willibald was soon commissioned to write a *Vita Bonifatii* for Boniface's heirs,

93 For more detailed discussion of the saints' lives written about Boniface and other Anglo-Saxon missionaries, see Shannon Godlove's contributions to this volume.

94 Compare Ian Wood, "The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian Hagiography," *Peritia* 1 (1982), 63–80; Alexander O'Hara, "The *Vita Columbani* in Merovingian Gaul," *EME* 17, no. 2 (2009), 126–53, and their joint commentary in their *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé and Life of Vedast* (Liverpool: 2016).

95 On the representations of the conflict and their implications see Albrecht Diem, "Monks, Kings, and the Transformation of Sanctity: Jonas of Bobbio and the End of the Holy Man," *Speculum* 82, no. 3 (2007), 521–59.

96 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 61–64; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 66–69 (on *peregrinatio*), 124–29 (on mission), and 155–58 (on church organization).

97 Tangl, nos 111, 112, 114.

Lull of Mainz and Megingoz of Würzburg. It could hardly be said to have done for the Bonifatian circle what Jonas's *vita* had done for the Columbanian network, but then Jonas had stood at some distance from his hero's death, with access to many stories he wanted to include about what had happened to the saint's heirs. Willibald had to content himself with more modest material. As he narrated a long story about Boniface winding down his activities in Germany before heading for his death in Frisia, he included instructions Boniface had allegedly given to Lull, Burchard of Würzburg, and Willibald of Eichstätt, entrusting them with various administrative duties.[98] This narrative strategy helped to create a sense of continuity between Boniface's work and the work of his heirs – a necessary move, perhaps, given that even Boniface was worried that his heirs' status as foreigners, *peregrini*, meant that they might lose legal and material support in the Frankish kingdoms: the production of hagiography was integral to the development of the long-term plan.

The intended audience and the circulation of the *Vita Bonifatii* reveal the difficulties in any attempt to use hagiography in a particular way. Willibald tried to establish Boniface on a par with Columbanus as a saint with connections to Britain, Germany, Gaul, and Tuscany; given that Boniface was included as the only recent saint in Charlemagne's calendar, it may be that the heirs of Boniface sought to capture interest in the saint from across Europe.[99] But the circulation of the *Vita Bonifatii* seems to have been more modest. The oldest copy is probably from Eichstätt either during or slightly after Bishop Willibald's episcopacy, while other early witnesses can be found from Reichenau and northeast France.[100] The Eichstätt copy reinforces the sense of a wider project because it includes Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebaldi et Willibaldi*, which expands the story of English activity in 8th-century Bavaria and the Holy Land. The other two manuscripts, however, juxtapose the story of Boniface with older saints. In the Reichenau manuscript, the story of Boniface was copied alongside those of saints such as Martial of Limoges (3rd century), Medard of Soissons (456–545), and others. In the French manuscript, on the other hand, Boniface was included alongside less local saints: Benedict of Nursia, Martin of Tours, and Ambrose of Milan. As temporal distance grew, the universal

98 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 44.

99 Ferdinand Piper, *Karls des Grossen Kalendarium und Ostertafel* (Berlin: 1858), 25.

100 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086 (Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* [3 vols, Wiesbaden: 1998–2014], no. 2930; http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0006/bsb00064004/images/); Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Perg. Aug. 136 (*Katalog*, no. 1660; http://www.stgallplan.org/stgallmss/viewItem.do?ark=p21198-zz0017n1jw); St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 552 (northeastern France; http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0552).

standards of sanctity Boniface represented seem to have mattered more than his missionary context. These are important reminders of how quickly the logic of a story and network can decompose with time.

The *Vita Bonifatii* also raises issues concerning the use of language in social networks. One thing which facilitated communication between these disparate groups was the common use of Latin to bring together figures who spoke Old English, Old Saxon, Greek, and more. This was famously a function of Latin Bede had remarked upon in 731.[101] But not everything is as it might seem. An odd story in the *Vita* tells of Boniface meeting Pope Gregory II and, after struggling to express himself in Latin, the saint requested that he be allowed to write down a statement of faith so that Gregory could understand him clearly.[102] It is an anecdote which might betray anxiety about the differences between learning formal Latin from books in England and speaking it in the vernacular in Rome. The problem did not, however, stop there. Willibald himself wrote in a style of Latin that was so complex and convoluted, so full of Aldhelmian wordplay and alliteration, that Otloh of St Emmeram in the 11th century declared that it was too hard to understand.[103] For Otloh, this was a justification for writing a new *Vita Bonifatii* to suit his own agenda. Nevertheless, Willibald's curious Latin and Otloh's complaint leave hanging the suspicion that not everyone could understand the complexities of the *Vita Bonifatii*. A failure to communicate effectively may have undermined the ambitions of Lull and his circle which they had hoped to promote through the text.

7 Boniface's Networks

In what ways, then, did Boniface's networks and circles shape his missionary work? He was drawn into the 8th-century mission fields in the first place because of pre-existing long-distance connections between Irish, English, Frankish, and papal figures, strengthened through the harmony of political and religious plans for expansion into the North. In this lively world of exchange, Boniface was readily able to establish a spiritual and legal presence with letters of support from the pope, the Frankish mayor, and his diocesan bishop in Wessex. He may have faced some localized resistance to his work within the Frankish kingdoms but the multiplicity of personal and political connections ensured that his work could always continue in some modified form, particularly

101 Bede, *HE*, I, c. 1.

102 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 28.

103 Otloh, *VB*, prologus, 111.

given his ability to form alliances with key social leaders and opinion-makers. Mission needed resources in terms of people, books, wealth, and moral support, and to obtain these Boniface generated bonds of obligation by invoking ideas of family, friendship, gift exchange, ethnicity, and the shared responsibilities of fellow Christians. The project of converting and Christianizing groups of people in Germany, in this context, started with practicalities and localities, but was always about wide-ranging political, intellectual, and memorial connections which drew Hessia and Thuringia into a varied European world.

It is important to recognize the complexity of Boniface's social and political connections. A great many labels which get used in discussions of mission and conversion appeal to modern needs to have clearly identifiable categories of analysis. Words such as *Insular* and *Continental*, *Christian*, and *pagan*, and a range of ethnic and even familial labels are always unstable because they are situational ideas which are constantly recombined in different ways. This remains the case even if one were to analyse the situation in terms of Peter Brown's "micro-Christendoms," with its idea of multiple efforts to engage with Christian universality at a local level. The logic and force of Boniface's missionary work evolved in relationship to the shifting situations in Francia, the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England, the papacy, and the Rhineland. To talk about a "Bonifatian mission" specifically is to talk about issues of belief and education which can never be understood properly in isolation from the wider panorama of Boniface's activities.

CHAPTER 4

Women in the Anglo-Saxon Missionary Circles

Felice Lifshitz

1 Introduction: Feminism

It has long been recognized that a number of women played active roles in the missionary circles around Boniface. The very first, and for many decades the only serious scholarly study of medieval nuns (Lina Eckenstein's 1896 *Woman under Monasticism*) devoted a chapter to "Anglo-Saxon Nuns in Connection with Boniface."[1] The vast majority of Eckenstein's discussion involved gleaning information about these women through a careful reading of the Boniface correspondence. The basic data that Eckenstein mined from the letters and from a handful of additional narrative texts concerning the names, positions, and activities of women in these missionary circles has been used relatively unchanged in dozens of subsequent studies based on the same sources, including this one. What has, however, changed dramatically in recent decades is scholarly evaluation of the intellectual accomplishments of the women in question. Whereas Eckenstein's assessment of letters from abbesses addressed to Boniface included negative comments such as "their Latin is cumbersome and faulty, and biblical quotations are introduced which do not seem always quite to the point. The writers ramble on without much regard to construction and style,"[2] Suzanne Wemple's 1981 generative study of the "cultural contributions," "the sisters' share in scholarship," and "the intellectual pursuits and spiritual influence" of early medieval Latin nuns definitively transformed historians' approach to the subject.[3] Scholars now uniformly highlight the prominence of women in the personal lives of Boniface and Lull; their collaboration as spiritual equals in all aspects of the professional lives (pastoral care, mission, education, liturgy) of those successive Mainz prelates; and the high quality of their minds, judging by the literary prowess displayed in their letters.[4]

1 Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism: Chapters on Saint-Lore and Convent Life between A.D. 500 and A.D. 1500* (Cambridge: 1896), 118–42.

2 Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 126.

3 Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500–900* (Philadelphia: 1981), 175.

4 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken in 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995), 321–31; Albrecht Classen, "Frauenbriefe an Bonifatius: Frühmittelalterliche Literaturdenkmäler aus literarhistorischer Sicht," *Archiv für*

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Although the present chapter covers some of this well-trodden ground, it primarily conveys the findings of my recent monograph, which explored a relatively neglected group of manuscripts in an attempt to dig more deeply into the intellectual and spiritual lives of the women in question.[5] A treasure trove of 8th-century manuscript material survives to illuminate what paleographer Bernhard Bischoff described as the "distinct area of Anglo-Saxon influence and Anglo-Saxon script [that] was established in Germany by the activities of Boniface and his pupils, as well as by the monks and nuns who followed them."[6] I argue, based on these manuscripts, that the Christian culture of the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia was gender-egalitarian and even feminist.[7] In 1993, Gerda Lerner confidently described the creation of feminist consciousness in Europe as beginning at least as early as the 7th century.[8] Her approach,

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Kulturgeschichte 72 (1990), 259–73; Christine Fell, "Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, eds. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: 1990), 29–43; Barbara Yorke, "The Bonifatian Mission and Female Religious in Wessex," *EME* 7, no. 2 (1998), 145–72; Deug-Su I, "Lioba, *dilecta Bonifatii*: Eine Liebesgeschichte im 8. Jahrhundert?," *Medieval English Studies* 10 (2002). http://hompi.sogang.ac.kr/anthony/mesak/mes102/IDS.htm; Hans-Werner Goetz, *Frauen im frühen Mittelalter: Frauenbild und Frauenleben im Frankenreich* (Weimar: 1995), 372–81; Stefan Schipperges, *Bonifatius et Socii eius: Eine Sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfried-Bonifatius und Seines Umfeldes* (Mainz: 1996); Heinrich Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien* (Würzburg: 2003); Janina Cünnen, *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten: Angelsächsische Frauenbriefe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: 2000); Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: 1996), 144–47; Hannah Urbahn, "'Ich umfasse Dich mit höchster Liebe': Der heilige Bonifatius und seine spirituellen Schwestern," in *Meine in Gott geliebte Freundin: Freundschaftsdokumente aus klösterlichen und humanistischen Schreibstuben,* ed. Gabriela Signori (Bielefeld: 1995), 40–49; Andy Orchard, "Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface," *ASE* 30 (2001), 29–34; Janina Cünnen, "'*Oro pro te sicut pro me*': Berthgyths Briefe an Balthard als Beispiele produktiver Akkulturation," in *Übersetzung, Adaptation und Akkulturation im insularen Mittelalter,* eds. Erich Poppe and Hildegard L.C. Tristram (Münster: 1999), 185–203; Gisela Muschiol, "Königshof, Kloster und Mission: Die Welt der Lioba und ihre geistlichen Schwestern," in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis 20. Jahrhundert,* ed. Franz J. Felten (Wiesbaden: 2004), 99–114; Cordula Nolte, "*Peregrinatio–Freundschaft–Verwandtschaft*: Bonifatius im Austausch mit angelsächsischen Frauen," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken,* eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 149–60.

5 Felice Lifshitz, *Religious Women in Early Carolingian Francia: A Study of Manuscript Transmission and Monastic Culture* (New York: 2014).

6 Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Dáibhí O Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: 1990), 93–94.

7 I prefer the phrase "Anglo-Saxon cultural province" to the more common "Anglo-Saxon mission zone" for those regions, such as the Main River valley, that were subject more to cultural influence than to Christian missionary activity; see Dennis Howard Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: 1998), 343.

8 Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: 1993), 12–13.

which I follow, involved defining "feminist consciousness" broadly enough to show that "women's resistance to patriarchal ideas" and "feminist oppositional thought" could include women who "would not have defined themselves as feminist in their own time."[9] From the work of Suzanne Wemple and her followers, Lerner knew of Boniface's female associates as well as of other prominent 7th- and 8th-century consecrated women; however, she was unable to describe in any detail the content of the "feminist consciousness" that must have accompanied their documents.[10] This essay, like the monograph on which it is based, begins to fill that gap.

2 Women

We possess varying degrees of information about the women in these missionary circles. In some cases, we do not even know their names, as is the case with the anonymous *ancilla Dei* ("handmaid of God") to whom Boniface turned for solace after crushing run-ins with "pagans, false Christians, fornicating clerics and pseudo-priests."[11] In other cases, we are aware only of a few biographical details, as is the case with Abbess Eadburga (of Minster-in-Thanet or Wimbourne), who was heartily thanked by Boniface for sending him books, and elsewhere asked by Lull to support his weakness with her strength.[12] The same applies to Lull's aunt Cynehild, who crossed the Channel to take up the monastic life alongside her unnamed husband and their children Baldhard and Berhtgyt. The latter worked for decades in Thuringia as a *magistra* (teacher) and regularly exchanged books with her cousin Lull.[13]

Best known, by far, is Leoba (ca. 710–782), who is attested in contemporary sources and memorialized in a biography by Rudolf of Fulda (d. 865) written around 836 on the basis of a lost older narrative and information garnered from Leoba's disciples.[14] As Boniface's "beloved," and in accordance with his wishes, her corpse was brought to Fulda in 782 so that she might be buried next

9 Lerner, *Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 14 and 17.

10 Lerner, *Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 24–26.

11 Tangl, no. 66: "…quassati sumus sive a paganis sive a falsis christianis seu a fornicariis clericis sive a pseudosacerdotibus" (translation mine).

12 Tangl, nos 10, 30, 35, 65, and 70; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius*, 63–64; Orchard, "Old Sources," 20–21.

13 Fell, "Some Implications," 39–40; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius*, 53.

14 Rudolf, *VL*, c. 1, 122; Theodor Klüppel, "Die Germania (750–950)," in *Hagiographies*, ed. Guy Philippart, vol. 2 (Turnhout: 1996), 174 and 181.

to Boniface.[15] However, around the time of the composition of her biography, Leoba's relics were moved into the crypt of a newly constructed church on the Petersberg outside of town, where she was surrounded by relics of the Saviour, the twelve apostles, and a number of early Christian martyrs.[16]

Rudolf's *vita* depicts Leoba as a great missionary, consecrated to Christ after her mother had a prophetic dream. Boniface left to her his cowl, and with it perhaps some of his official authority. It has even been suggested that Leoba ruled the women's house at Tauberbischofsheim as well as the men's house at Fulda (both Bonifatian foundations) as a double community.[17] Rudolf recounted how Leoba travelled frequently with other *sanctimoniales* to Fulda, where she ate and slept among the monks, and how at the end of her life she forsook her monastery at Tauberbischofsheim and took up residence in a newly-founded women's monastery in her villa at Schornsheim near Mainz, a gift from Charlemagne.[18] Rudolf also narrated the many trips Leoba made to meet with Boniface, other bishops, and Pippin and Charlemagne. Certainly, Leoba possessed political clout, serving as one of Charlemagne's royal counselors and as Queen Hildegard's spiritual director.[19] But politics and administration were sidelines. Rudolf's Leoba was also the very epitome of a Christian teacher, knowledgeable in all aspects of Christian literate culture, including scientific

15 Boniface's wish to have Leoba buried in a single grave with him was reported by Rabanus Maurus: *Rabani Mauri Martyrologium*, ed. John M. McCulloh, CCCM, vol. XLIV (Turnhout: 1979), 99, and Rudolf of Fulda, *VL*, c. 17, 129. The monks of Fulda did not comply and buried Leoba in an adjacent grave: Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius*, 102–04; I, *L'eloquenza del silenzio nelle fonti mediolatine: Il caso di Leoba, "dilecta" di Bonifacio Vinfrido* (Florence: 2004), 180–85.

16 Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula Sanctorum in ecclesias Fuldenses Translatorum*, ed. Georg Waitz MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), c. 14, 339; Hans Hahn, "Fulda: Domplatz-Bereich, St. Michael, Petersberg," in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst,* eds. Helmut Roth and Egon Wamers (Sigmaringen: 1984), 309–11; David Parsons, "Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence," *EME* 8, no. 1 (1999), 59–61; Janneke Raaijmakers, "Een sacraal landschap: Rudolf van Fulda over Hrabanus' reliekentranslaties," *Millennium. Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 14 (2000), 15–16.

17 I, "Lioba, *dilecta Bonifatii*," n.p.

18 Rudolf, *VL*, c. 11, 126, cc. 17–21, 129–30; Marie Anne Mayeski, *Women at the Table: Three Medieval Theologians* (Collegeville: 2004), 61, 72, 74–77, 94, 98, 102–03; Thomas Schilp, *Norm und Wirklichkeit religiöser Frauengemeinschaften im Frühmittelalter* (Göttingen: 1998), 51–52; Katrinette Bodarwé, "Frauenleben zwischen Klosterregeln und Luxus? Alltag in frühmittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern," in *Königin, Klosterfrau, Bäuerin: Frauen im Frühmittelalter,* eds. Helga Brandt and Julia K. Koch (Münster: 1996), 141, and number 114 on the list and map in the appendix.

19 Mayeski, *Women at the Table*, 66–67; Frank Staab, "Die Königin Fastrada," in *Das Frankfurther Konzil von 794: Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur,* ed. Rainer Berndt, vol. 1 (Mainz: 1997), 185.

methods of biblical study. The letter collection showed Leoba as a prominent teacher, sought out by women eager for higher education.[20] Boniface initially called Leoba from England during the 740s "to instruct the [female] servants of God in the monasteries of Germany in divine scriptures."[21] There were many such women to instruct.

Franconia, the region to which Boniface called Leoba, was among the richest and most economically developed areas of Francia.[22] Franconia as a whole was awash with more aristocratic wealth than anywhere else in the former Roman world.[23] The substantial coterie of potential patrons must have been one of the things that attracted so many Anglo-Saxon intellectuals to the area, for Frankish aristocracies could support a much larger learned religious class than could the impoverished elites of post-Roman Britain.[24] Strikingly, that regional aristocracy had already developed a strong commitment to supporting the devotional and intellectual aspirations of women.

Well before the foundation of significant men's communities, or indeed of the episcopal see of Würzburg (741), a wealthy and powerful women's monastic community already existed in the commercial metropolis of Mainz (the abbey of Altmünster).[25] The lush *Weinberge* (wine-producing hills) of the Middle Main also guaranteed nutrition, pleasure, and income to three other women's

20 Tangl, no. 67.

21 Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium*, ed. McCulloh, 99: "…ut famulas Dei in monasteriis Germaniae divinis scripturis instrueret" (translation mine).

22 Hermann Dannheimer, "Im Spiegel der Funde: Die Besiedlungsgeschichte nach den archaeologischen Quellen," in *Karolingisches Franken,* ed. Wolfgang Buhl (Würzburg: 1973), 88–89 and 95–97; Ludwig Wamser, "Mainfranken: Land und Leute im Spiegel der Archaeologie," in *Kilian: Mönch aus Irland. Aller Franken Patron (689–1989): Katalog der Sonderausstellung zur 1300 Feier des Kiliansmartyriums 1989–Festung Marienburg* (Munich: 1989), 43–44 and 54–56; Egon Wamers, "Das Untermaingebiet im späten 8. Jahrhundert," in *794–Karl der Große in Frankfurt am Main: Ein König bei der Arbeit. Ausstellung zum 1200-Jahre Jubiläum der Stadt Frankfurt am Main*, ed. Johannes Fried (Sigmaringen: 1994), 37.

23 Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford: 2005), 794–805.

24 Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 805–14.

25 Nancy Gauthier et al., *Province ecclésiastique de Mayence (Germania Prima): Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule XI* (Paris: 2000), 23 and 35–36; Ludwig Falck, *Mainz im frühen und hohen Mittelalter (Mitte 5. Jahrhundert Bis 1244)* (Düsseldorf: 1972), 13–15, 23, and 41; Margarete Weidemann, "Urkunde und Vita der hl. Bilhildis aus Mainz," *Francia* 21 (1994), 32–39; Margarete Weidemann, "Die hl. Bilhild und die Gründung des Altmünsterklosters," in *1300 Jahre Altmünsterkloster in Mainz: Abhandlungen und Ausstellungskatalog,* eds. Ingrid Adam and Horst Reber (Mainz: 1994), 57–63; Ernst Erich Metzner, "Das Kloster 'Lorsch' der Königin 'Ute' im römisch-germanischen Kontext," in *Ze Lorse bi dem münster: Das Nibelungenlied (Handschrift C:). Literarische Innovation und politische Zeitgeschichte,* ed. Jürgen Breuer (Munich: 2006), 197; Bodarwé, "Frauenleben," 122.

monasteries.[26] Of these three, the most significant by far was Karlburg (today part of Karlstadt am Main), closely associated with the family later known as the Carolingians that would soon rise to royal, and eventually imperial, status. An enormously rich and important house, Karlburg was the center of clearing and settlement for the surrounding territories, which it developed and ruled both as a secular mark and as a parish.[27] The other two pre-Bonifatian women's monasteries in the Middle Main Valley, Zellingen and Ochsenfurt, were less significant than Karlburg, but still quite affluent by most standards.[28] The Frankish nobility was, in general, extremely supportive of all forms of religious life for women,[29] but the Main Valley was especially blessed in this regard.

This preexisting orientation of the region may well explain why Boniface recruited the English nuns Thecla (d. after 747) and Leoba to his team and, at the earliest opportunity, founded a new women's monastery in the Main Valley, at Kitzingen, for Thecla, and another house for women in the nearby Tauber Valley (Tauberbischofsheim) for Leoba.[30] As a stable wine-producing area much like the Middle Main, the Tauber Valley was a natural location for female monastic development. Boniface also installed, as first bishop of Würzburg, a male member of the team who was particularly comfortable collaborating with women: the West Saxon Burchard had already spent approximately twenty years on the Continent in Echternach, a men's monastic community closely associated with two local women's houses, Oeren in Trier and Pfalzel by Trier.[31]

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26 One locale that could not boast a pre-Bonifatian women's monastery was Würzburg itself; the women's community supposedly ruled by Immina and purportedly located on a hill overlooking the left bank of the town is a 12th-century fiction; see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 25–28.

27 Hansjoachim Daul, "Karlburg: Eine Frühfränkische Königsmark," PhD Diss. (University of Würzburg: 1961), 46–51; Jürgen Lenssen (ed.), *Gertrud in Franken: Ausstellung der Diözese Würzburg und der Pfarrei Karlburg 1991 in Marmelsteiner Kabinett* (Würzburg: 1991), 34.

28 Kübert, *Karlburg,* 30; Ludwig Wamser, "Zur archäologischen Bedeutung der Karlburger Befunde," in *1250 Jahre Bistum Würzburg: Archäologisch-historische Zeugnisse der Frühzeit* eds. Jürgen Lenssen and Ludwig Wamser (Würzburg: 1992), 323 and 328; Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien,* 92–94; Klaus Lindner, *Untersuchungen zur Frühgeschichte des Bistums Würzburg und des Würzburger Raumes* (Göttingen: 1972), 17–18; Siegfried Wenisch, *Ochsenfurt: Von der frühmittelalterlichen Gemarkung zur domkapitelschen Stadt* (Würzburg: 1972), 8–11 and 28–41.

29 Donald Hochstetler, *A Conflict of Traditions: Women in Religion in the Early Middle Ages (500–840)* (Lanham: 1992), 117–67, especially 117–18.

30 Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien,* 239.

31 Winfried Böhne, "Bischof Burchard von Würzburg und die von ihm benutzten liturgischen Bücher," *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 50 (1988), 50–52; Rosamond McKitterick, "Frankish Uncial: A New Context for the Echternach Scriptorium," in *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk,* eds. Petronella Bange and Anton Gerard Weiler (Nijmegen: 1990),

In the early 740s, he looked to Abbess Cyneburg of Inkberrow, possibly his former teacher, as his spiritual mentor, legal protector, and secular lord (*domina*).[32] Despite its proximity to Würzburg, which could be reached via an easy and direct overland route, Tauberbischofsheim pertained to Boniface's diocese of Mainz, yet another sign of his close relationship with Leoba.[33]

Kitzingen quickly became the most significant women's monastery of the region. Its significance derived in the first instance from its position as a replacement Carolingian *Eigenkloster* for Karlburg that, in the course of a series of complex property transfers during the 740s, had been given by Carloman and Pippin to Würzburg.[34] The abbesses of Kitzingen enjoyed *Reichsunmittelbarkeit*, that is, immediate, direct subjection and access to the imperial court.[35] The first abbess, Hadeloga, was the daughter of Charles Martel and his second wife, Swanahild, and was thus the half-sister of Carloman and Pippin.[36] The significance of Kitzingen also derived from its status as the institution with the most learned *magistra* in the entire region, Thecla.[37] Nevertheless, the major school established by Leoba at the new Bonifatian foundation at Tauberbischofsheim provided some competition for the best minds in the region, as did Schwarzach, another new women's community with a strong educational focus whose establishment was owed to the traditional local Frankish elites, and not to the insular newcomers.[38] Walburga (Walpurga), the younger sister

383–85; Matthias Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger. Die Verwandtschaft Irminas von Oeren und Adelas von Pfalzel: Personengeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur frühmittelalterlichen Führungsschicht im Maas-Mosel-Gebiet* (Sigmaringen: 1982), 326–29.

32 Tangl, no. 49; Fell, "Some Implications," 32–33; Yorke, "Bonifatian Mission," 155–57; McKitterick, "Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Personal Connections," 21–24; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius,* 109–11.

33 Lindner, *Untersuchungen,* 16; Reiner Butzen, *Die Merowinger östlich des Mittleren Rheins: Studien zur militärischen, politischen, rechtlichen, religiösen, kirchlichen, kulturellen Erfassung durch Königtum und Adel im 6. sowie 7. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: 1987), 79–80.

34 Dirk Rosenstock, "Die Besiedlung des Kitzinger Raumes in schriftloser Zeit," in *1250 Jahre Kitzingen am Main: "apud Kizinga monasterium,"* eds. Klaus Arnold and Helga Walter (Kitzingen: 1995), 50–51; Heinrich Wagner, "Die Äbtissinen des Klosters Kitzingen," *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 64 (2002), 20.

35 Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien,* 92; Helmut Petzolt, "Abtei Kitzingen: Gründung und Rechtslage," *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1955), 77, 79, and 81–82.

36 Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien,* 47, 54, 70–73, and 82; Wagner, "Die Äbtissinen," 18–20; Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius,* 148–49. Although both Wagner and Schipperges believe (in my view, erroneously) that Kitzingen's original foundation as a Pippinid *Eigenkloster* predated Boniface, they agree that its development as a center of learning did not.

37 Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien,* 76, 81, and 84–85.

38 Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac Socii eius,* 102–04; Gabriel Vogt, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Abtei Münsterschwarzach," *Mainfränkisches Jahrbuch* 32 (1980), 57; Franziskus Büll, *Das*

of the brothers Abbot Wynnebald of Heidenheim and Bishop Willibald of Eichstätt, came from Wessex to study either at Kitzingen or Tauberbischofsheim (it is not clear which), before succeeding her brother Wynnebald as the head of the community of Heidenheim, into which she integrated women. One of these women, Hygeburg of Heidenheim, went on to produce the *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, saints' lives which, as James Palmer argues, may also be considered as significant works of theology and exegesis.[39] Tauberbischofsheim attracted Continental noble girls as well, such as the Thuringian Willeswind, mentioned by Rudolf in his *Life* of Leoba.[40]

3 *Scriptoria*

One important result of the arrival of these immigrants from England was the beginning of book production in the region.[41] The preconditions for this level and type of intellectual culture were clearly already in place, but women such as Thecla and Leoba turned potential into reality. Bernhard Bischoff, who first connected the 8th-century manuscripts of the Main Valley with female religious communities, also suggested that women in England (such as Bugga, who promised around 720 to send *passiones martyrum* to Boniface) or on the Continent produced the books in use in the newly founded diocese of Würzburg.[42] Local production could not gear up overnight; the first book that Burkhard commissioned for his new cathedral library, a copy of Augustine's *De*

Monasterium Suuarzaha: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Frauenklosters Münsterschwarzach von 788(?) bis 877(?) (Münsterschwarzach: 1992), 288–90.

39 Rita Haub, "Die ältesten Originalurkunden im Archiv des Benediktinerinnenklosters St. Walburg in Eichstätt," *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 5 (1996), 125; James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (Turnhout: 2010), 278.

40 Rudolf, *VL*, c. 15, 128.

41 The newcomers introduced organized book production, not books. Old High German evidenced a far-reaching exposure to the Latin vocabulary of literacy independent of (and even contrasting with) Old English forms. Tellingly, what Old English speakers did introduce to Old High German was the technical vocabulary necessary for discussing individual letter forms, such as would be required in a *scriptorium*; for instance, the word for a "letter" (book sign) in Old High German (*buohstab,* as opposed to *rûnstab* for a runic sign) was borrowed from Old English *bōcstæf* (as opposed to *rūnstæf*). For details, see Green, *Language and History,* 256–69.

42 Bernhard Bischoff and Josef Hofmann, *Libri sancti Kyliani: Die Würzburger Schreibschule und die Dombibliotheck im VIII u. IX Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: 1952), 6–14; Tangl, no. 15; Tangl, no. 105; Yorke, "The Bonifatian Mission," 148–49.

Trinitate, was ordered from the nuns of the house of Chelles, near Paris.[43] Meanwhile, it appears that Burchard's *domina* Cyneburg gifted to Kitzingen a copy of Jerome's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* inherited from her predecessor Abbess Cuthswith (Cuthsuuitha) of Inkberrow (ca. 693–709).[44] However, within a few years at the most, in addition to continuing to acquire books from elsewhere, institutions in the new diocese of Würzburg were also producing their own.

The oldest surviving manuscripts from the Würzburg area date from approximately the late 740s through the early 790s. In the middle of the 20th century, they were grouped by Bernhard Bischoff into two clusters. He associated one cluster with the woman's name Gun(t)za and dated this group to the second third of the 8th century: Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek manuscripts M.p.th.f. 13, M.p.th.f. 17, M.p.th.f. 78, and M.p.th.q. 28a.[45] He associated the other group with the woman's name Abirhilt and dated this group to the final third of the 8th century: Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek manuscripts M.p.th.f. 45, M.p.th.f. 69, and M.p.th.q. 28b.[46] All these manuscripts show Continental students trying to work in Insular traditions, while introducing some Continental motifs; the result was a mixed Insular-Continental style with a uniquely local stamp.[47] The dominant script in both groups of manuscripts was a German-Insular minuscule, also with a local stamp. This is exactly what we would expect to find in books produced at an established Frankish monastery under the influence of teachers newly arrived from England. The mixing of styles makes sense for the later codices as well, for insular immigrants continued to influence the Anglo-Saxon cultural province until practically the end

43 Oxford, Bodleian Laud miscellaneous 126; Felice Lifshitz, "Demonstrating Gun(t)za: Women, Manuscripts, and the Question of Historical 'Proof,'" in *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens: Soziales Gedächtnis, Herrschaft und Besitz,* eds. Walter Pohl and Paul Herold (Vienna: 2002), 78.

44 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q.2; Patrick Sims-Williams, "Cuthswith, Seventh Abbess of Inkberrow, near Worcester, and the Würzburg Manuscript of Jerome on Ecclesiastes," *ASE* 5 (1976), 5–6, 10–12, 16, 18, and 21; Klaus Arnold, "Kitzingens Anfänge: Die erste Erwähnung in der *vita Sturmi* des Eigil von Fulda und die Frühzeit des Klosters Kitzingen," in *1250 Jahre Kitzingen am Main,* eds. Arnold and Walter 16–17; Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 30.

45 Bischoff, *Libri Sancti Kyliani*, 7. The name "Gun(t)za" was spelled once with and once without a *t* in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f.13 (fols. 8r and 57v).

46 Bischoff, *Libri Sancti Kyliani*, 6–14. Abirhilt was the last of several scribes on Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 45; she signed her name on folio 71v. For reasons why I have removed one of Bischoff's Abirhilt manuscripts from the group (Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q.18) see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 223–24.

47 Andreas Weiner, *Initialornamentik der Deutsch-Insular Schulen im Bereich von Fulda, Würzburg und Mainz* (Würzburg: 1992), 56–57, 82, and 86.

of the century, and the first wave of women trained in the 740s and 750s to produce books would have tutored their students in Insular techniques. At the same time, the majority of the members of the community would have come from Continental backgrounds.[48]

During the 740s, Karlburg was the Würzburg-area institution most capable of hosting a full-fledged *scriptorium*.[49] By the 780s, Kitzingen had eclipsed Karlburg in terms of personnel and other resources. The women of the former (Karlburg) and the replacement (Kitzingen) Carolingian proprietary houses cooperated over the course of decades, with the bulk of the work taking place at Karlburg during mid-century (resulting in the Gun(t)za group of manuscripts) and shifting to Kitzingen over the course of time (resulting in the Abirhilt group). Near the end of the 8th century, all these books (and many others besides, some imported, some locally produced) were concentrated at Kitzingen, for they appeared on the library catalogue of Kitzingen in Basel, Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek F III 15a folios 17v–18r.[50] Analysis of this codex, alongside the Gun(t)za and Abirhilt books themselves, reveals much about the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia during the 8th century.

4 Manuscripts: Texts and Transmissions

The codex containing the Kitzingen library catalogue is an ideal witness to the intellectual networks of Anglo-Saxons and Franks across the English Channel, as well as to the relations between religious men and women in Francia. The list of books was written into the margins of, and then erased from, an 8th-century manuscript produced in the Bonifatian men's foundation of

48 Previous discussions of these two groups of manuscripts include Hermann Knaus, "Das Bistum Würzburg," in *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz,* ed. Bernhard Bischoff, vol. 4.2 (Munich: 1979), 952–53; Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, 175–88; Rosamond McKitterick, "Les femmes, les arts et la culture en Occident dans le haut Moyen Âge," in *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident* (*VIe–XIe siècles*), eds. Stéphane Lebecq et al. (Lille: 1999), 149–62; idem., "Frauen und Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter," in *Weibliche Lebensgestaltung im frühen Mittelalter,* ed. Hans-Werner Goetz (Cologne: 1991), 65–118; and "Nuns' Scriptoria in England and Francia in the Eighth Century," *Francia* 19 (1992), 1–35.

49 Wamser, "Zur archäologischen Bedeutung," 321, 328, and 341; Kübert, *Karlburg,* 79; Peter Ettel and Dieter Rüdel, "Castellum und villa Karloburg: Historische und archäologische Überlieferung," in *1250 Jahre Bistum Würzburg*, eds. Lenssen and Wamers, 311, 316, and 318; Lifshitz, "Demonstrating Gun(t)za."

50 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 32–36.

Fulda.[51] The main text in the Basel codex was an extract from the late 7th- or early 8th-century English long recension of Isidore of Seville's *De natura rerum*, copied from an English codex of ca. 750 (Basel Öffentliche Universitätsbibliothek F.III.15f).[52] The Kitzingen booklist, along with a handful of other texts, was copied into the Fulda codex by a Fulda monk when he was visiting Kitzingen. Around 800, Fulda monks were becoming increasingly responsible for the governance of religious women in small communities all across Franconia. When the opportunity presented itself to acquire a record of books of interest to a female community, the Fulda monk made a copy of the Kitzingen library catalogue. It is, however, the other additions to the codex that are particularly telling.

The first addition made by the Fulda monk was the simple rubric *Titulus sepulchri Paulae* (fol. 17r). The monk was planning to acquire, but never did, the section of Jerome's Letter to Eustochium on the death of her mother, Paula, in which Jerome quoted the epitaph he had composed for Paula's tomb in Bethlehem.[53] The Fulda monk's interest in an epitaph suitable for the tomb of a holy woman of noble birth who had left her native land to settle in foreign territory was surely a result of the presence of Leoba's tomb at Fulda. Next the Fulda monk wrote in the famous *Basler Rezepte* ("Basel recipes"): three pharmacotherapeutic texts, the first in Latin and the next two in Old High German.[54] One treated an unspecified problem variously identified as simple fever, epilepsy, or typhoid fever accompanied by hallucinations, while another was effective against *cancur* (either boils or cancerous growths).[55] The third, the *Basler Blutsegen*, was a charm-like prayer against excessive and painful menstruation.[56]

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51 Hartmut Broszinski and Sivka Heyne, *Fuldische Handschriften aus Hessen mit weiteren Leihgaben aus Basel, Oslo, dem Vatikan und Wolfenbüttel* (Fulda: 1994), 58–59; Gangolf Schrimpf et al., *Mittelalterliche Bücherverzeichnisse des Klosters Fulda und Andere Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bibliothek des Klosters Fulda in Mittelalter* (Frankfurt: 1992), 3–6.

52 Claudia Di Sciacca, "Isidorian Scholarship at the School of Theodore and Hadrian: The Case of the *Synonyma*," in *Quaestio: Selected Proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic,* ed. Catherine Jones (Cambridge: 2002), 86–87; Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: 2008), 55–58.

53 Jerome, Letter 108, in *Epistulae*, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, CSEL 55.1 (Vienna: 1910–1918), 350.

54 Robert Nedoma, "Enti danne geoze zisamane: Die althochdeutsche Fassung des *Ersten Basler Rezepts* (BR Ib)," *Die Sprache. Zeitschrift für Sprachwissenschaft* 39 (1997), 175 and 189; Brian Murdoch, "Charms, Recipes, and Prayers," in German Literature of the Early Middle Ages, ed. Brian Murdoch (Woodbridge: 2004), 59.

55 Nedoma, "Enti danne geoze zisamane," 169–74; Rauch, "'Basler Rezept I,'" 526–27; Murdoch, "Charms, Recipes and Prayers," 59.

56 Carole Miller, "Old High German and Old Saxon Charms: Text, Commentary and Critical Bibliography," PhD Diss. (Washington University in St. Louis: 1963), 70; Michelle P. Brown,

There was a high number of blood-stanching charms and recipes, most of which were for types of flux other than menstrual blood (such as wounds or nosebleeds).[57] The Basel hemostatic charm was unusual not only in its concern with menstruation but also in its invocation of a female figure: "Beronice," also known as Veronica, who was identified, by the 8th century, as the woman in the Gospels cured of excessive bleeding by touching the hem of Jesus' garment.[58] Most sections of the *Blutsegen*, including the invocation of Beronice, were paralleled in another codex, and only there: the Royal Prayerbook, a late 8th- or early 9th-century Mercian prayer book.[59] The two sets of charm-like prayers represented parallel developments from a single tradition, neither having been copied from the other.[60] That tradition was a female one, for the Royal Prayerbook was owned by a female physician in a nunnery.[61] This transfer of gynecological texts testifies to the existence of female networks of textual transmission that connected the women of the Anglo-Saxon mission to their peers across space and time.

It is simple to pinpoint the circumstances under which a Fulda monk would have copied down pharmacotherapeutic texts while visiting Kitzingen, where Abbot Sturm of Fulda had been, over a one-month period probably in 748, nursed or doctored back to health after falling ill on a journey.[62] Early medieval religious women regularly engaged in medical practice,[63] but the superior medical expertise of the Kitzingen women was praised in Sturm's biography, written (during the 810s) by Eigil of Fulda at the request of Angildruth, abbess

"Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Ninth-Century Prayer Books," in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts,* eds. Christian J. Kay and Louis M. Sylvester (Amsterdam: 2001), 57.

57 Miller, "Old High German and Old Saxon Charms," 96–130.

58 Mary Swan, "Remembering Veronica in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Writing Gender and Genre in Medieval Literature: Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts,* ed. Elaine Treharne (Cambridge: 2002), 22–24, concerning Matthew 9:20–22, Mark 5:25–34, and Luke 8:43–48; Alphons Augustinus Barb, "Die Blutsegen von Fulda und London," in *Fachliteratur des Mittelalters: Festschrift für Gerhard Eis*, eds. Gundolf Keil et al. (Stuttgart: 1968), 485–86.

59 London, British Library, Royal 2.A.xx, front cover and fols. 16v and 49rv; Barb, "Die Blutsegen," 486–89.

60 Barb, "Die Blutsegen," 493.

61 Swan, "Remembering Veronica," 35–36; Brown, "Female Book-Ownership," 57.

62 Arnold, "Kitzingens Anfänge," 20.

63 Albrecht Diem, *Das Monastische Experiment: Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens* (Münster: 2005), 262; Albrecht Diem, "Rewriting Benedict: The *regula cuiusdam ad virgines* and Intertextuality as a Tool to Construct a Monastic Identity," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 17 (2006), 315 and 318.

TABLE 4.1 Manuscripts from Gun(t)za and Abirhilt groups and others

Manuscript shelfmark	Contents and provenance
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 69	Pauline Epistles (Kitzingen)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 17	Augustine, Commentary on the Psalms (Karlburg)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 45	Gregory I, Homilies on the Gospels (Kitzingen)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 78	Apostolic Passionary (Karlburg)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28b Part 1	The Kitzingen *Libellus*
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28b Part 3	Isidore of Seville, Synonyms (Kitzingen)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28a	Isidore of Seville, Synonyms (Karlburg)
Vienna, Österreichische National-bibliothek 2223	Penitential collection (Karlburg)
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 18	Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*
Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 32	Lectionary (Karlburg)

(or nun) of Kitzingen and dedicatee of the narrative.[64] Eigil must have visited Kitzingen shortly before 800, where he became acquainted with various aspects of the nuns' medical prowess and recorded some of what he learned.

The Gun(t)za and Abirhilt manuscript groups evidence similar dynamics of textual transmission, as women in the new diocese of Würzburg sought – and their allies in England provided – particular books to support the intellectual and spiritual lives of Franconian Christians. Table 4.1 shows those members of the two manuscript groups, as well as a few additional codices, that are discussed in this essay.

64 Eigil, *VS*, c. 14, 146; Arnold, "Kitzingens Anfänge," 18 and 23; Petra Kehl, "Die Entstehungszeit der Vita Sturmi des Eigil," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994), 11–20; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons,* 195–98; Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Die Ermordung des Erzbischofs Bonifatius durch die Friesen: Suche und Ausgestaltung eines Martyriums aus kirchenpolitischer Notwendigkeit?," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 98.

The Karlburg copy of a portion of Augustine's *Commentary on the Psalms* (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 17) was made from an ancient (6th-century or older) witness that came to the house via England, which the Karlburg scribes edited during the production process so as to remove the bishop of Hippo's most offensive misogynistic musings.[65] Even more interesting in this regard is an original Karlburg compilation of Latin passions of the apostles (Würzburg, Üniversitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 78), the oldest surviving example of such a homogeneous collection.[66] The first Greek apostolic acts were owed to female authors and/or women's oral traditions and were aimed at the liberation of women; the reworked Latin versions of those narratives were equally feminist.[67] Although the protagonists were male, important female characters abounded in the narratives, and gender-egalitarian principles were elaborated in speeches placed in the mouths of both male and female figures.

The seven *passiones* in the codex arrived at Karlburg in different ways. One of the texts, the passion narrative of Matthew (which actually painted a local royal princess and consecrated virgin Ephigenia as the true apostle of Ethiopia, far overshadowing Matthew) was very likely an original composition made at Karlburg itself.[68] Some of the pre-existent texts moved through entirely Continental networks. Finally, a significant section of the compilation (the passions of Philip, of Bartholomew, and of Simon and Jude) came from England through the cross-Channel connections of the Anglo-Saxon missionary circles, reflecting the devotional predilections of its members. For instance, Guthlac, who received his education at the monastery of Repton under abbess Ælfthryth, set himself up in a hermitage with St Bartholomew as a spiritual mentor. Guthlac died in approximately 715, and his attachment to Bartholomew was a central theme of his biography by Felix, written between 721 and 749.[69] Whether or not Guthlac acquired his devotion to Bartholomew from his former abbess, which would indicate involvement on the part of the women of Repton in the

65 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 38–40.

66 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 41–49.

67 Stevan Davies, *Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* (Carbondale: 1980); Dennis R. Macdonald, *The Legend and the Apostle: The Battle for Paul in Story and Canon* (Philadelphia: 1983); Virginia Burrus, *Chastity as Autonomy: Women in the Stories of the Apocryphal Acts* (Lewiston: 1987); Felice Lifshitz, "Apokryphe Apostelgeschichten und Apostellegenden als 'feministische' Narrative," in *Vom Blutzeugen zum Glaubenszeugen? Formen und Vorstellungen des christlichen Martyriums im Wandel,* eds. Gordon Blennemann and Klaus Herbers (Stuttgart: 2014), 71–81.

68 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 47.

69 Graham Jones, "Ghostly Mentor, Teacher of Mysteries: Bartholomew, Guthlac and the Apostle Cult in Early Medieval England," in *Medieval Monastic Education,* eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: 2000), 136–37.

development and transmission of the passion narrative, the intense Guthlac–Bartholomew connection demonstrates the existence of strong feelings for Bartholomew in Anglo-Saxon circles just when immigrants from England were transforming the culture of Karlburg. Likewise, the text celebrating the apostles Simon and Jude as team (rather than as two separate individuals, as in most traditions) appears to have been created in England, where its existence is first attested by Bede.[70] Lull of Mainz was particularly devoted to the apostolic pair, and was likely the conduit for the text's journey to Karlburg.[71] In the final apostolic *passio* to reach Karlburg from England, Philip is accompanied by his daughters: "sacratissima virgines" through whom the Lord gained a multitude of virgins. That "most holy virgins" were a *sine qua non* of missionary activity must have been taken for granted in the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in the middle decades of the 8th century. The passionary was organized to culminate with the closing image of those virgins, buried to the left and right of the apostle Philip. In the context of this cultural imaginary concerning the very apostles, we can understand why Boniface (as we have already seen) wished to have Leoba buried by his side.

Both the older Gun(t)za group of manuscripts and the younger Abirhilt group of manuscripts included a copy of the *Synonyms* of Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636). Already in the time of Aldhelm this text was a precociously popular source of devotional and penitential motifs, as well as a model of style, in the West Saxon homeland of Thecla and Leoba.[72] Fifteen of the thirty-eight extant extra-Spanish manuscripts of the *Synonyms* from the 9th century or earlier are in the Anglo-Saxon tradition.[73] Despite some debate concerning whether the young Boniface personally wrote in an early 8th-century English copy of the *Synonyms* (St. Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Lat. Q.v.I.15), there is agreement that the text was of paramount importance in the West Saxon cultural zone on the Continent and that the English newcomers were central in its early transmission and promotion.[74]

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70 Els Rose, *Ritual Memory: The Apocryphal Acts and Liturgical Commemoration in the Early Medieval West* (*c. 500–1215*) (Leiden: 2009), 63–64.

71 Butzen, *Die Merowinger*, 82; Felice Lifshitz, *The Name of the Saint: The Martyrology of Pseudo-Jerome and Access to the Sacred in Francia, 627–827* (Notre Dame: 2005), 50–51.

72 Di Sciacca, "Isidorian Scholarship," 77–78, 80, 99–100, and 102; Matthew T. Hussey, "*Transmarinis litteris*: Southumbria and the Transmission of Isidore's *Synonyma*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107 (2008), 148, 150, and 155.

73 Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words,* 75.

74 Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words*, 51–52, 68–69 and 72–76; Matthew T. Hussey, "The Franco-Saxon *Synonyma* in the Ragyndrudis Codex: Anglo-Saxon Design in a Luxeuil-Scripted Booklet," *Scriptorium* 58 (2004), 237–38; Hussey, "*Transmarinis litteris*," 141–42, 155–56, and 168; Matthew T. Hussey, "Ascetics and Aesthetics: The Anglo-Saxon

The work circulated in two slightly different recensions.[75] The Karlburg copy (Würzburg Üniversitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28a) preserves the rare Λ recension, best represented by St. Petersburg, Rossijskaja Nacionalnaja Biblioteka, Lat. Q.v.I.15.[76] The Karlburg Isidore and the St. Petersburg codex were copied from the same (lost) exemplar.[77] The common exemplar of the St. Petersburg and Karlburg Isidores must have travelled to the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia with the Anglo-Saxon immigrants who first established the *scriptorium* at Karlburg.[78] The Kitzingen copy of Isidore's *Synonyms* (Würzburg Üniversitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28b Codex 3) preserves the common Φ recension, and was made from the same exemplar used to produce the famous Ragyndrudis Codex (Fulda Dommuseum Bonifatianus 2), possibly for Boniface, shortly before the middle of the 8th century.[79] The fact that the very manuscript used to make Boniface's personal copy of the *Synonyms* found its way to Kitzingen is eloquent testimony to the intellectual networks of the Anglo-Saxons on the Continent, both male and female.

Near the end of the 8th century, the *scriptorium* at Kitzingen also produced an original collection built around the passion narratives of martyrs (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 28b Codex 1). In this case, however, all the martyrs were women (Cecilia, Juliana, Agnes and Agatha), and all their passions were original abbreviated versions of longer texts. This block of

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Manuscripts of Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma*," PhD Diss. (University of Wisconsin-Madison: 2005), 38–40 and 53–74; Jacques Elfassi, "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: Édition critique et histoire du texte," PhD Diss. (École Pratique des Hautes Études-Paris: 2001), 13–123 and 643–834.

75 Jacques Elfassi, "Trois aspects inattendus de la postérité des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: Les Prières, Les Textes hagiographiques et les collections canoniques," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* n.s. 1 (2006), 110–11; Elfassi, "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville," 195 and 515; Elfassi, "Les deux recensions des *Synonyma*," in *L'Édition critique des œuvres d'Isidore de Séville: Les Recensions Multiples*, eds. M.A. Andrés Sanz, J. Elfassi, and J.C. Martin (Paris: 2008), 154, 173, and 175; Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words*, 18–19.

76 Isidore, *Synonyma,* ed. Elfassi, xxxvii and xlii–xlv; Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words,* 51–52, 69, and 72.

77 Elfassi, "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: édition critique et histoire du texte," 211.

78 Elfassi, "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: édition critique et histoire du texte," 619–20.

79 Isidore, *Synonyma,* ed. Elfassi, xxviii–xxix, xl, and cviii; Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Überlegungen zur Tradition des Bonifatius-Martyriums anläßlich der Teilfaksimilierung des Ragyndrudis-Codex," *Hessisches Jarhbuch für Landesgeschichte* 46 (1996), 7; Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Heiligen Bonifatius* (Paderborn: 1994), 27–34 and Abb. 22; Hussey, "The Franco-Saxon *Synonyma,*" 229–31 and 236–38. For a discussion of the extent to which the codex should be associated with Boniface, see Michel Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife: How the Ragyndrudis Codex Came to be a *Vita Bonifatii*," *The Heroic Age* 10 (2007), § 3.

passions also was framed by selected theological texts.[80] Like the Karlburg apostolic passionary, the Kitzingen *libellus* functioned historiographically, recounting (through a combination of texts) a particular stage in the spread of Christianity. Furthermore, again like the Karlburg passionary, it constructed female figures as central to the conversion process, in the Kitzingen case as the main protagonists in the process of Christianization of the Italian peninsula. This *libellus* was constructed from multiple sources (combined with some original compositions). One source must have been a lost collection of martyr passions closely related to Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France lat. 10861, produced at Christ Church, Canterbury, or by an Anglo-Saxon working on the Continent or in another English house related to Christ Church, such as the women's houses of Minster-in-Thanet or Winchcombe, during the 810s or 820s.[81] The Paris codex contained copies of the full passion narratives of Cecilia, Agnes, Agatha, and Juliana, along with a number of other saints, and undoubtedly shared a close common ancestor with the codex used for the Kitzingen *libellus*.[82] This lost common ancestor attests to the continued exchanges of important texts between the women of the Bonifatian houses in Franconia and their Anglo-Saxon peers elsewhere. Finally, the translation of Paul's Epistles in an Abirhilt (Kitzingen) group copy of the text (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f.69) was also based on an English exemplar.[83]

5 Manuscripts: Textual and Visual Analysis

The contents of the books produced in women's houses established by Anglo-Saxon missionaries are even more illuminating than the connections that brought the various texts to these *scriptoria*.[84] The sparsity of overt evidence for female book production in England has been tied to the theory that "women

80 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 49–54.

81 Michelle P. Brown, "Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 10861 and the Scriptorium of Christ Church, Canterbury," *ASE* 15 (1986), 126, 131–32, and 137.

82 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 54.

83 Oliver Sticht, "Spuren in Wort und Bild: Aspekte der Bibelüberlieferung in Würzburg UB M.p.th.f. 69," *Biblos. Beiträge zur Buch, Bibel und Schrift* 52 (2003), 224; Herrad Spilling, "Irische Handschriftenüberlieferung in Fulda, Mainz und Würzburg," in *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter,* ed. Heinz Löwe, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: 1982), 899–902; Bonifatius Fischer, *Lateinische Bibelhandschriften im frühen Mittelalter* (Freiburg/Breisgau: 1985), 63 and 173; Patrick McGurk, "Oldest Manuscripts of the Latin Bible," in *The Early Medieval Bible: Its Production, Decoration and Use*, ed. Richard Gameson (Cambridge: 1994), 2–4.

84 All of the manuscripts analysed in this essay, as well as a handful of other codices, are discussed more thoroughly in Lifshitz, *Religious Women*.

simply did not feel the need to draw attention to their gender when labouring this way in the service of their God."[85] It is true that the gendered messaging in these women's books is often quite subtle, but on the whole the evidence may suggest the existence of a feminist consciousness. There was, by the 8th century, a highly developed tradition in both Greek and Latin Christianities of female orchestration of the cult of Mary as a way to justify women's real-world claims to power and influence. Female impresarios realized "that how the Virgin was defined theologically would influence the extent and social meaning of her spiritual power."[86] The utilization of Marianist theological strategies made particular sense in the Main Valley, where the majority of the women's monasteries, including Karlburg, were dedicated to the Mother of God. The region was fertile ground for the implantation, and further cultivation, of the elevated level of Marian veneration that already characterized Anglo-Saxon Christianity.[87]

The Marian doctrines in the Karlburg passionary and the Kitzingen *libellus* were about as woman-friendly as possible, for both painted Mary as at least equally significant as, or even more significant than, her son Jesus in salvation history. For instance, the *passio* of Bartholomew consisted almost entirely of a long (and effective) apostolic missionary sermon explicating the fundamentals of the new religion as a faith in which the Virgin was the key player and in which the incarnate savior was more often the Son of the Virgin (*filius virginis*) than the Son of God (*filius dei*). In Bartholomew's Marian theology, the Annunciation and subsequent Incarnation were only set in motion by Mary's autonomous, unprovoked, and entirely unprecedented (in all of human history) decision to remain a virgin. Although scholars have argued that the most feminist way to view Mary's role in the Incarnation is to emphasize her willing and reactive participation in an event that was in no way of her own making,[88] the author of the *passio* of Bartholomew found a way to treat Mary as proactive. This section of Bartholomew's *passio* was subsequently quoted verbatim by the compiler of the Kitzingen *libellus*, where the theology around Mary reinforced the activities attributed to saintly human heroines, such as Cecilia

85 Brown, "Female Book-Ownership," 60.

86 Kate Cooper, "Empress and *Theotokos*: Gender and Patronage in the Christological Controversy," in *The Church and Mary,* ed. R.N. Swanson, *Studies in Church History* 39 (Woodbridge: 2004), 49.

87 Mary Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: 1990), 267.

88 Elisabeth Gössman, "Mariologische Entwicklungen im Mittelalter: Frauenfreundliche und frauenfeindliche Aspekte," in *Maria: Für alle Frauen oder über allen Frauen?,* eds. Elisabeth Gössman and Dieter Bauer (Freiburg: 1989), 66–69.

consecrating a church, Agnes wearing a *stola* (a priestly garment), and Juliana hearing confession.[89]

One of the most striking creations of the women's scriptoria of the Main Valley was a full-page crucifixion miniature originally made as a frontispiece for the Kitzingen Pauline Epistles.[90] Depictions of the crucifixion were just becoming common when the Kitzingen artist was at work, virtually requiring her to construct her own iconographic program.[91] She did so, drawing on a number of different textual sources of inspiration (such as Aldhelm of Malmesbury's verse treatise on virginity, dedicated to an unidentified Abbess Maxima, and a version of the *Vision of St. Paul*, a popular text in the Anglo-Saxon missionary circles).[92] In the process, she reflected much of the collaborative spirit that animated the women and men of the mission. The Kitzingen miniature is an author portrait of Paul, telling the reader about the author of the text to come, but it is so much more than that: a multi-layered image in which each figure (Paul, Christ, and their various companions) was subject to multiple simultaneous interpretations designed to convey the truth of Paul's central assertion that "as many of you as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek: there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27–28).

89 For these and other Marian doctrines, and the sacerdotal activities of the female martyrs, in the relevant manuscripts, see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 123–25, 130–36, and 139–46.

90 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. f. 69 fol. 7r. The image is analysed in minute detail in Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 65–86.

91 General studies of some of the oldest extant examples include Victor Elbern, "Theologische Spekulation und die Gestaltungsweise frühmittelalterlicher Kunst," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 1 (1967), 144–55; Marie-Christine Sepière, *L'image d'un dieu souffrant (IXe–Xe siècle): Aux origines du crucifix* (Paris: 1994); Genevra Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire* (University Park: 1996); and Celia M. Chazelle, *The Crucified God in the Carolingian Era: Theology and Art of Christ's Passion* (Cambridge: 2001).

92 Aldhelm of Malmesbury, *Carmen de Virginitate*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald, MGH AA XV (Berlin: 1919), 373; Andy Orchard, *Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994), 6–16 and 171–76; Lenka Jiroušková (ed.), *Die Visio Pauli: Wege und Wandlungen einer orientalischen Apokryphe im Lateinischen Mittelalter unter Einschluß der alttschechischen und deutschsprachigen Textzeugen* (Leiden: 2006), 918–24; Aldhelm, *Prosa de Virginitate*, ed. Rudolf Ehwald, MGH AA XV (Berlin: 1919), 256; Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Ipswich: 1979), 81; Marina Smyth, "Origins of Purgatory through the Lens of Seventh-Century Irish Eschatology," *Traditio* 58 (2003), 113; Augustune M.C. Casiday, "St. Aldhelm on Apocrypha," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 55 (2004), 151–52; Tangl, no. 10 and no. 115; Peter Dinzelbacher, "Die Verbreitung der apokryphen *Visio Sancti Pauli* im mittelalterlichen Europa," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 27 (1992), 87.

ILLUSTRATION 4.1 Crucifixion, frontispiece of the Kitzingen Pauline Epistles. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. f. 69, fol. 7r, 8th century

The ideas embedded in and conveyed by the Kitzingen crucifixion miniature are numerous and varied; its significance must be parsed rather than summarized, and there is space in this essay to address only a handful of the ways in which the Kitzingen theologian-artist incorporated gendered messages into the image. Some of the messages turned on understanding the sacred power

that inhered in the consecrated garments through which religious women "put on Christ."[93] Others relied on the notion that the virginity of a consecrated woman paralleled Christ's sacrifice on the cross as an act of voluntary self-immolation bringing benefits to the entire church. This was the thrust of the rite for the consecration of virgins in the Gallican liturgy; not incidentally, the text of that rite centered on the Pauline exhortation to offer one's body as "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God" (Romans 12:1).[94] All these messages could be clarified during discussions between the artist and other members of her community, her male and female colleagues associated with other ecclesiastical institutions, and the powerful lay aristocrats (including the royal family) with whom the Kitzingen community was regularly in contact.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the image in terms of illuminating the world of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries concerns the passengers in the boat: Paul's followers, some bearded and bald men, others women with either long hair or fabric head coverings. The fact that the audience of the image comprised primarily women provided a key rationale for the theologian-artist's decision to include the image of a boat trip as part of the composition. The act of pilgrimage (including metaphorical understandings of it) was almost an obsessive theme in the writings of the women of the Bonifatian circle.[95] Even outside of discussions of travel and pilgrimage, women from this group expressed themselves through naval metaphors.[96] It is no wonder that a female artist, working for a female audience, constructed an image that brought together the central Christian icon of the crucifixion with a depiction of a boat trip (an unusual combination that "has caused some consternation" among art historians).[97]

The most famous of Paul's followers was Thecla, his legendary companion in mission.[98] Paul and Thecla were no distant exotic figures in the Anglo-Saxon

93 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 75–80.

94 Gabriel Ramis, *La Consagración de la mujer en las liturgias occidentales* (Rome: 1990), 71–73, 118–19, 126–28, 132, 146–47, 197, Appendix I Sections 3–10, and Appendix II. On the (pluriform) "Gallican liturgy," that is, the style of worship current in Francia prior to the Carolingian reforms, see Els Rose (ed.), *Missale Gothicum e codice Vaticano Reginensi latino 317 editum*, CCSL 159D (Turnhout: 2005), 190–93.

95 Julie Ann Smith, "Sacred Journeying: Women's Correspondence and Pilgrimage in the Fourth and Eighth Centuries," in *Pilgrimage Explored,* ed. Jennifer Stopford (York: 1999), 42–44, 51–53, and 55.

96 For instance, Abbess Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg (aka Bugga) used the metaphor "animarum nostrarum naviculae" to praise Boniface (Tangl, no. 14).

97 Heather Pulliam, *Word and Image in the Book of Kells* (Dublin: 2006), 176–77.

98 Sheila E. McGinn, "The Acts of Thecla," in *Searching the Scriptures,* eds. Elisbeth Schüssler Fiorenza with Shelly Matthews, vol. 2 (New York: 1993), 819 and 827, n. 81; Anne Jensen, *Thekla – Die Apostolin: Ein apokrypher Text neu entdeckt* (Gütersloh: 1999), 113–16.

cultural province in Francia; on the contrary, their contemporary analogues were prominent in the regional devotional landscape. Boniface of Mainz, latter-day Paul to Thecla of Kitzingen, consistently utilized Pauline reminiscences in his letters to his female disciples so as to style himself as heir to the apostle.[99] For instance, when Boniface wrote to thank Abbess Eadburga for sending books to Germany, he constructed his letter largely out of allusions to the Pauline epistles.[100] Of the 150 total biblical citations in Boniface's surviving letters, sixty were to the Pauline epistles alone, a staggering proportion.[101] Boniface's Pauline self-fashioning was accepted and further developed by his first biographer, Willibald, who used the conceit that Boniface was a second Paul as a leitmotif of his *vita* of the saint. Significantly, Willibald first introduced the theme when Boniface began to make a name for himself as a teacher of both men and women, describing how the saint's male Bible students "flocked to hear him," whereas his female Bible students (unable continually to come to his lectures) took their classes in their own monasteries, where they "applied themselves with diligence to the study of the sacred texts."[102]

When, therefore, women in the Anglo-Saxon cultural province pictured Paul, they also pictured Boniface, "their" Paul, and themselves, Boniface's helpers. The women who supported Boniface surely saw in themselves not only Paul's special companion, Thecla, but also the dozens of women mentioned and/or addressed by Paul in his letters as leaders of Christian communities. Their consciousness could accurately be described as feminist, for "the cult of Saint Thecla remained closely linked with communities of women among whom Thecla's example was a source of empowerment."[103] Veneration of Thecla was strong in the Anglo-Saxon cultural province, for there were at least two important women named Thecla at Kitzingen (where the Pauline crucifixion miniature was produced) during the 8th century, and one of Leoba's disciples still bore the name in 836, when she conveyed memories of her *magistra* to Rudolf of Fulda.[104]

99 Orchard, "Old Sources," 35 and 38; Wagner, "Die Äbtissinen," 28 and 32–33.

100 Orchard, "Old Sources," 22.

101 Orchard, "Old Sources," 22.

102 For this quotation, and the first explicit parallel with Paul, see Willibald, *VB*, trans. Talbot, c. 2, 114. For more on Boniface's Pauline self-fashioning, and Willibald's use of Paul as a leitmotif, see Shannon Godlove, "'In the words of the Apostle': Pauline Apostolic Discourse in the Letters of Boniface and his Circle," *EME* 25, no. 3 (2017), 320–58.

103 Stephen J. Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla: A Tradition of Women's Piety in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: 2001), vi.

104 Davis, *The Cult of Saint Thecla*, 200–08; Rudolf, *VL*, c. 1, 122.

Just as religious women needed copies of books of the Bible, they also needed biblical commentaries. For instance, Bede wrote an allegorical exposition of the Canticle of Habakkuk for a women's community so that the sisters could better understand the text they sang at Lauds every ferial Friday.[105] The women of Karlburg and Kitzingen produced copies of patristic texts, among them a Gun(t)za group copy of Augustine of Hippo's homiletic commentary on the gradual Psalms and an Abirhilt group copy of a portion of Pope Gregory I's homiletic commentary on the Gospels.[106] The women of Karlburg and Kitzingen were not alone in embracing patristic writings. Fourteen percent of the named scribes in the *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (or *CLA*, a survey of Latin manuscripts older than 800) were female; all copied exclusively patristic texts.[107] However, the Karlburg and Kitzingen scribes did not reproduce and transmit patristic writings indiscriminately or randomly. The patristic works copied at Karlburg and Kitzingen highlighted numerous female embodiments of Christian virtue; they did so in very different (albeit consistently gender-egalitarian) ways that reflected the theological differences separating Augustine from Gregory. Augustine's female and male exemplars of faith both generally illustrated his core theology of grace and human dependency on God, whereas Gregory emphasized the meritorious, heroic efforts of both female and male human saints.[108] Indeed, Gregory's fulsome praise of Mary Magdalen in his Gospel homilies trumpeted her as the ultimate symbol of virtue and the ideal exemplar for all Christians, a notion that was (to judge by the marks of readership in the relevant sections of the codex) enthusiastically embraced at Kitzingen where the manuscript was produced and used.[109]

Strikingly, even when Augustine addressed the Fall, arguably the biblical episode that has been most vulnerable to misogynistic interpretations, his musings steered clear of any anti-woman tendencies; in fact, his various discussions of the tragedy in the garden of Eden included passages praising

105 Bede, *In Cantica Habacuc Allegorica Expositio*, ed. J.E. Hudson, CCSL 119B (Turnhout: 1983), 381–409; Benedicta Ward, "'To My Dearest Sister': Bede and the Educated Woman," in *Women, the Book and the Godly: Selected Proceedings of the St. Hilda's Conference 1993,* eds. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor, vol. 1 (Cambridge: 1995), 105–12.

106 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 17 (Augustine) and Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f. 45 (Gregory); Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 38–41.

107 James J. John, "The Named (and Namable) Scribes in *Codices Latini Antiquiores*," in *I scribi e colofoni: Le sottoscrizioni di copisti dalle origini all'avvento della stampa,* eds. Emma Condello and Giuseppe De Gregorio (Spoleto: 1995), 113 and 115–21.

108 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 93–95 and 99–100.

109 Gregory I, "Homily 25," in *Gregor der Grosse, Homiliae in Evangelia/Evangelienhomilien*, ed. and trans. Michael Fiedrowicz, vol. 2 (Freiburg: 1997), 442–61; Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.f.45 fols. 13r–18r; Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 101–02.

fecund Eve, mother of all humanity and type of Mother Church.[110] Such an approach was exceptional across Augustine's vast *oeuvre*, but this feature of his homilies on the gradual Psalms may help explain the willingness of the women of Karlburg to propagate his text. Whereas Augustine only occasionally espoused woman-friendly views, Gregory the Great was well known in England for his writings in support of women. For instance, the pope forcefully repudiated misogynist ritual purity laws prohibiting menstruating or post-partum women from entering a church or taking communion in his *Responsiones* to Augustine of Canterbury (601), and regularly sought to empower women through his extensive correspondence.[111] That such views could be associated with Gregory gave them added social force, for veneration of Gregory reached its historical apogee in Anglo-Saxon circles during the 8th century, when his status was comparable to that of Augustine and Jerome.[112] Gregory's earliest *vita* (ca. 704–714) was written by an anonymous nun or monk of the Northumbrian double monastery of Whitby, who singled out his Gospel homilies for particular praise.[113] When Boniface was settling his team into the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia, he specifically sought a copy of the *Responsiones* – presumably successfully, for the text was repeatedly and emphatically cited in a collection of legal texts (primarily penitentials) produced at Karlburg around 800.[114]

6 Beyond Books: Liturgy

The Whitby biography of Gregory the Great takes on added significance when we try to extrapolate beyond the intellectual lives of the women of the

110 Augustine, "Exposition of Psalm 126," ed. Gori, pp. 196–99; Augustine, "Exposition of Psalm 127," ed. Gori, pp. 221–22. For all of the passages related to the Fall, see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 95–97.

111 Gregory I, *Libellus Responsionum*, eds. Paul Ewald and Louis Hartmann, MGH Epistolae 2 (Berlin: 1899), 332–43; Bill Friesen, "Answers and Echoes: The *Libellus responsionum* and the Hagiography of North-western European Mission," *EME* 14, no. 2 (2006), 153–57; Walter J. Wilkins, "'Submitting the Neck of Your Mind': Gregory the Great and Women of Power," *Catholic Historical Review* 77 (1991), 583–94; repr. in *Christianity and Society: The Social World of Early Christianity*, ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: 1999), 584–85 and 587–88.

112 Alan Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great: The Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the 7th and Early 8th Centuries," *EME* 7, no. 1 (1998), 81.

113 *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby*, ed. Bertram Colgrave (Lawrence: 1968), 116–18.

114 Thacker, "Memorializing Gregory the Great," 81; Friesen, "Answers and Echoes," 157–59. For details concerning the Karlburg penitential codex (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 2223) see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 60–61 and 103–05.

Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia to their real-world activities. The text was a veiled polemic against priestly hierarchical authority intended to support the pastoral and sacerdotal duties of consecrated women.[115] In England, monasteries known as "minsters," including double communities such as Whitby, discharged a variety of parochial, pastoral, and ministerial functions.[116] On the Continent, canonesses played active pastoral roles in the community.[117] Gary Macy has shown that abbesses were ordained, were vested in the sacristy, wore mitres, carried staffs, heard confessions, administered penance and reconciliation, absolved sins, and excommunicated sinners everywhere throughout Latin Europe.[118] Meanwhile, scattered bits of evidence gathered from throughout the Latin world demonstrate that consecrated women engaged in a wide range of "clerical" activities: they ministered at and around the altar; they offered the chalice to communicants; they brought forward the gifts during mass; they recited from the Gospels and the letters of Paul; they distributed communion; they enacted blessings; they led prayers; they performed solo prayers; they possessed supplies of consecrated hosts for use in exorcisms and healings; they preached; they taught; they baptized children; they engaged in intercessorial prayer; and they chanted the Psalms at public liturgical performances.[119] It has even been suggested that "some bishops allowed women to participate at the altar either as priests or as deacons" and that some early medieval women were both formally ordained and recognized as clerics.[120] All of this encourages me to speculate that members of the women's communities at Kitzingen and Karlburg may have officiated in local churches run by their houses.

Very little manuscript evidence bears directly on the question of gender and liturgical practice in the new diocese of Würzburg during the 8th century; however, that which does survive supports the suspicion that consecrated women took an active role not only in performing but also in producing Christian liturgy. The codex Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q.32, originally

115 Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: 1998), 12.

116 See essays in Peter Blair and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral Care before the Parish* (Leicester: 1992); Roberta Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture: The Archeology of Religious Women* (London: 1994), 25–26.

117 Hochstetler, *A Conflict of Traditions*, 76–88.

118 Gary Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West* (Oxford: 2008), 80–86.

119 Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination,* 80–86; Gisela Muschiol, *Famula Dei. Zur Liturgie im merowingischen Frauenklöstern* (Münster: 1994), 182–84, 210–11, and 217.

120 Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination,* 14–15, 35 and 77–80.

a sacramentary combined with a lectionary, was produced in the region during the second half of the 8th century, most likely by and for the women of Karlburg.[121] It included readings for the celebration of saints' feasts and other rites that were markedly gender-egalitarian. Unlike many other liturgical codices, the lectionary in Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q.32 forced no gendered preconceptions on those who utilized it, for its common readings never implied that the saints of a given category (apostles, confessors, martyrs, or virgins) were exclusively, or even predominantly, male or female.[122] The Karlburg lectionary also contained readings for a whole range of rites to be performed at the local church supervised by the community: the consecration of a priest; masses for too much rain, against evil judges, or against bishops who acted evilly; blessings for salt or against toothaches; and exorcisms. The women of Karlburg presumably took an active role in those external liturgical performances. Certainly, they performed the readings, for the Karlburg penitential collection (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 2223) explained that female servants of Christ (*famulae Christi*) "read the readings in their churches and complete as a ministry whatever pertains to the arrangement of the sacrosanct altar, except what is proper especially to priests and deacons."[123] It is possible that the Karlburg nuns pushed the edge here and even performed eucharistic services, given recent arguments that some women were ordained in much of early medieval Europe, and that they may have performed the eucharistic liturgy even when lacking formal ordination.[124]

In fact, the peculiar way that a local copy of Isidore of Seville's *De ecclesiasticis officiis* treated the biblical woman with the alabaster jar may have provided support for consecrated women in the diocese who wished to play sacerdotal roles. According to all four versions of her story, one in each of the canonical gospels, she anointed Jesus soon before the crucifixion.[125] This story has been called "the most startling gender inversion in the gospels" for its depiction of a

121 For details on this manuscript, see Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 186–89.

122 Lifshitz, "Gender Trouble."

123 Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 2223, fol. 12v: "…in suis ecclesiis lectiones legere et inplere ministerio quae convenient ad conpositionem sacro sancti altaris nisi ea tantum modo que specialiter sacerdotum et diaconorum sunt" (translation mine). The text is an extract from Chapter 22 of the *Discipulus Umbrensium* version of the Penitential of Theodore. The quotation in this note reflects the text as it appears in the actual manuscript; the modern edition of this text by F.W.H. Wasserschleben, *Die Bussordnungen der abendländischen Kirche nebst einer rechtsgeschichtlichen Einleitung* (Halle: 1851), 209, contains minor differences in spelling and punctuation from the manuscript text.

124 Macy, "The Ordination of Women," 490–96.

125 Luke 7:36–50; Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9; John 12:2–8.

woman performing a priestly act on a male body.[126] This female biblical figure, identified by the 8th century as Mary Magdalen, appeared repeatedly in the sermons of Augustine copied at Karlburg, and in those of Gregory copied at Kitzingen, as well as in the Kitzingen *libellus*.[127] She also appeared in Isidore's discussion of the Last Supper, commemorated on the fifth day of the last week of Lent. There the bishop of Seville explained what was to be done in all churches on Holy Thursday: "the altars and the walls and the floors of the church are washed and the vessels that are consecrated to the Lord are purified. And on this day also the Holy Chrism is prepared, because two days before the Passover Mary arranged to perfume the head and feet of the Lord with oil."[128]

Isidore acknowledged that the act of a woman lay behind the chrism mass of Holy Thursday, but he discussed this fact in the context of ecclesiastical housekeeping, rather than in the sections of the work dealing with the sacramental activities of male priests and the miracle of the mass, thereby erecting a firewall between Mary and priests. Yet Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 18, an 8th-century codex made in England and given to the Würzburg cathedral, had a disturbed textual order, probably as a result of having been copied from an exemplar that had fallen apart and been rebound in the wrong order, with one quire missing completely.[129] In this codex, Mary's unction of Christ became part of Isidore's discussion of the priesthood, which amplified the sacramental charge of her liturgical action. Here, the beginning of I.14 describing the sacrificial mysteries performed by priests since Old Testament

126 Lynda L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: 1997), 14.

127 Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 96–97, 105–06, and 137–38. The first author to make this identification, which quickly became entrenched in Christian biblical commentary, was Gregory I. See Felice Lifshitz, "Women: *The DaVinci Code* and the Fabrication of Tradition," in *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice,* eds. Celia Chazelle et al. (New York: 2011), 66–76.

128 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. C.M. Lawson, CCSL 113 I. 28/29 (Turnhout: 1989), 32: "Quo die proinde etiam sanctum crisma conficitur quia ante biduum paschae Maria caput ac pedes domini unguento perfudisse perhibetur." Thomas Knoebel (trans.), Isidore of Seville. *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (Mahwah: 2008), 51.

129 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis,* ed. Lawson, 29. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 18 jumped from the middle of I.8/9 to the middle of I.14 (on fol. 5r), leaping directly from prayers to offertories, then continued in proper order until it broke off midway through I.28/29 (on fol. 15r) on the Lord's Supper, and returned to the closing portion of I 8/9, then continued through I.10 on readings (Isidore's first discussion of Mary Magdalen) and beyond in proper order through the previously omitted opening section of I.14, on offertories, which then flowed immediately (on fol. 20rv) into the previously omitted closing section of I.28/29.

times ("The priest stretched out his hand in offering and he poured out the blood of the grape and he poured out at the foot of the altar a divine odor to the most high prince") was followed immediately by the end of 1.28/29, describing how Mary Magdalen "perfumed the head and the feet of the Lord with oil" ("caput ac pedes domini unguento perfudisse").[130]

The juxtaposition of Mary Magdalen with Hebrew priests in the Würzburg cathedral copy of Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, a handbook for liturgical practice, glaringly recognized the similarities in their divinely authorized and approved actions. At the very least, it may have provided food for thought for readers open to extensive female participation in the liturgy; at most, it authorized that participation in the female-run churches of the 8th-century diocese of Würzburg. A tiny but significant error in the Würzburg cathedral copy of Isidore's liturgical guide provides one more glimpse of the situation there. Isidore assigned only one externally oriented function to communities of consecrated women: to produce clothes for male monks and clerics.[131] But the scribe who, back in England, produced this copy of the text was unable to understand the exchange envisioned by Isidore and wrote the nonsensical *ut stes que* in the place of *vestesque* (clothes).[132] Anglo-Saxon nuns did more than weave, and so did their counterparts in the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia.

7 Conclusion: The Limits of Feminism

As the very existence of this handbook shows, there is much to be said about Boniface, his collaborators, and his rivals. Much more than I have been able to include here could be said about the Anglo-Saxon cultural province in Francia, and about women in the Bonifatian circles. In this essay, I have chosen to give particular prominence to some of the evidence for the existence of a feminist

130 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.14, trans. Knoebel, 39; Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th.q. 18, fols. 20r–20v. Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.14, ed. Lawson, 16: "Porrexit sacerdos manum suam in libationem et libavit de sanguine uvae et fudit in fundamento altaris odorem divinum excelso principi."

131 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 11.16 (15).17, ed. Lawson, 79: "Lanificio etiam corpus exercent atque sustentant vestesque ipsas monachis tradunt, ab his invicem quod victui opus est resumentes" ["By weaving they also exercise and sustain the body, and they provide this clothing to the monks who are men, bringing back from each of them whatever their means of providing their living is"]; trans. Knoebel, 89.

132 Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. q. 18, fol. 51r (a variant not noted in Lawson's edition).

consciousness among those women, a feminist consciousness that was limited by our standards. Their feminism began and ended as a resistance to patriarchal ideas, particularly as they concern women. 8th-century Christian nuns would never have subscribed to the more radical definitions of feminism that are central to contemporary feminist theory, in which feminism involves a resistance to any and all kinds of hierarchy, domination, inequality, or oppression on the basis of race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, relationship to the means of production, or (in some cases) even species. Aristocratic exploitation of agricultural labourers (to take but one issue) surely did not bother them. But the denigration of their capacities and dignity as women absolutely did. What Rosemary Radford Reuther said of Hildegard of Bingen and Mechthild of Magdeburg can also be said of the women of the monasteries of Karlburg and Kitzingen: "they reshaped the gender symbolism of [Christian] spiritualities in a way that clearly made them agents of their own lives … This is surely some part of feminism."[133]

133 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History* (Berkeley: 2005), 306.

PART 2

Written Sources

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CHAPTER 5

Boniface as Poet and Teacher

Emily V. Thornbury

1 Introduction

Ignorance, Boniface repeatedly wrote, is the "mother of all error," and most of his life was spent combatting it.[1] From his early career as a teacher at a small Hampshire monastery to his final decades as an evangelist, he devoted himself to raising Christian knowledge from its foundations, which, for him, were built on grammar: the art of analysing language and interpreting texts. Though he himself came from a region that had only been Christian for a few generations, Boniface's writings show that he nevertheless considered himself part of a tradition of Latin scholarship stretching back to the ancient world. Yet, even as he cited antique authorities, he also adhered to a peculiarly English template: Boniface was a poet-grammarian in the model pioneered by Aldhelm of Malmesbury and practised throughout 8th-century England. As a poet and teacher, then, Boniface was in many ways typical of his time, and his writings are in well-established modes – elementary grammars, metrical treatises, epistolary verse, and *enigmata*. These texts, simultaneously traditional and idiosyncratic, reveal much about early medieval educational culture and about Boniface's own mind.

2 *Grammate doctor*: Wynfrith at Nhutscelle

A child oblate – self-given, according to his biographer Willibald – Boniface, or Wynfrith as he was then called, was raised and educated in the monastery at Exeter.[2] Though we know little of Exeter at that period, it must have been equipped to provide much more than the minimum of Latin needed to observe monastic customs, since by the time Wynfrith moved in his late teens or twenties to the monastery of Nursling (about five miles northwest of Southampton),

1 *Praefatio ad Sigebertum*, line 58, in *Bonifatii* (*Vynfreth*) *Ars Grammatica*, eds. George John Gebauer and Bengt Löfstedt, CCSL 133B (Turnhout: 1980); cf. *Enigma* XIX, line 1 (*De ignorantia*: "nutrix errorum"), in *Collectiones aenigmatum Merouingicae aetatis*, ed. Fr. Glorie, CCSL 133 (Turnhout: 1968), 339.

2 Willibald, *VB*, c. 1–2, 6–8.

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he seems to have been nearly ready to serve as its schoolmaster, and may perhaps have been recruited for that reason. Willibald tells us that he

> …laudably shone, indeed, with the greatest scriptural learning – being imbued as much with the eloquence of the art of grammar and the inner melody of metrical fluency as with both straightforward historical exposition [of scripture] and the threefold spiritual interpretation – and with the skill of the art of composition.[3]

While one might reasonably be cautious about taking Willibald's hagiographical account as Wynfrith's actual *curriculum vitae*, this description – which we *can* plausibly read as the résumé of an ideal schoolmaster of the period – tells us a great deal about the early Anglo-Saxons' understanding of what education entailed. Willibald attributes two areas of expertise to Wynfrith: *scripturarum eruditio* ("knowledge of scriptures") and *dictandi peritia* ("skill in composition"). Scriptural knowledge is further divided into two sets of two: grammar and metrics, first; and then the ability to comment on both the literal and spiritual senses of scripture. "Knowledge of scriptures" thus entails not biblical commentary alone, but the ability to understand and analyse all written works: it is fitting, then, *grammatica* is listed first, as an intrinsic and foundational part of such knowledge.[4] Interesting and typical of England in this period, though, is the companion to grammar in Willibald's list: metrics. This discipline would not have been directly useful to biblical commentators, since neither the Vulgate nor the Vetus Latina were metrical (although a long tradition – known, as we shall see, to Wynfrith – connected various books of the Hebrew Bible with particular metres). Yet poetry seems to have been central to Latin education in early medieval England, and Willibald's carefully balanced list provides a hint as to why: grammar corresponds to the outer, historical sense of scripture, while the *medullata modulatio* ("inner measure") of metre parallels the inner, spiritual senses: metrics thus provides a glimpse into the hidden order of language.[5] Strikingly, the art of composition (*dictandi peritia*) is not further

3 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 9: "maxima demum scripturarum eruditione – tam grammaticae artis eloquentia et metrorum medullata facundiae modulatione quam etiam historiae simplici expositione et spiritalis tripertita intellegentiae interpretatione inbutus – dictandique peritia laudabiliter fulsit." (Unless noted, translations are my own.)

4 Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: "Grammatica" and Literary Theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge: 1994), provides a detailed and influential account of the ideology with which early medieval *grammatica* was intertwined; see pages 298–305 for Boniface's work, and his influence on *grammatica* in the Carolingian empire.

5 For more evidence of this view of metre among Boniface's contemporaries, see Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: 2014), 45.

divided: we are left to infer that it involved the creation of the same structures that *scripturarum eruditio* taught one to recognize.

Wynfrith's own educational writings show that Willibald's portrait represented his beliefs and practices well. Two treatises connected with Wynfrith-Boniface survive: an *ars grammatica* with a pair of elaborate prefaces in prose and verse, and a much briefer discussion of metre.[6] Both seem to have been composed during his time at Nhutscelle, and thus represent some of the best extant evidence for the way Latin was studied and taught in early 8th-century Wessex.

With his *ars grammatica*, Wynfrith entered a longstanding field of linguistic scholarship whose parameters, previously defined by the Mediterranean world, had been shifted by the conversion of the British Isles. The difficulties Latin posed for native speakers of Germanic and Celtic languages were not easily solved. Though a wide array of linguistic treatises survived from the Classical and (especially) Late Antique periods, these were generally meant for advanced scholars; even the more elementary treatises took the basics of the Latin language for granted. Teachers in Britain and Ireland were thus faced with the task of adapting this inherited material to solve the new problem of teaching Latin as a second language to those who might well have never heard it spoken. Vivien Law has traced the development of a solution used by early medieval teachers: the elementary parsing grammar.[7] These new grammars were built on a Late Antique structure, usually that of Donatus' *Ars minor*, a brief treatise from the 4th century arranged by the eight parts of speech. Most relied heavily on earlier sources, but early medieval authors added new sets of examples to the theoretical explanations of the ancient grammarians, providing students with templates for noun and adjective declensions, verb conjugations – in essence, all the basic structures of language that native speakers absorb without instruction.

Such elementary grammatical instruction had a substantial history in Britain by the time Wynfrith began to write his own grammar.[8] Indeed, the very availability of multiple sources seems to have in part spurred his decision to write his own book: in the preface to his text (addressed to an otherwise unknown Sigeberht), he writes that he intends to fulfil his student's request

6 The standard edition of both the *Ars grammatica* and metrical treatise is Gebauer and Löfstedt (eds.), *Bonifatii Ars Grammatica*, CCSL 133B (Turnhout: 1980).

7 For the development of early medieval language teaching texts, see Vivien Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge: 1982), and her *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages* (London: 1997). This article's discussion of Boniface's grammatical work and its intellectual context is deeply indebted to Law's work.

8 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 102–05.

> …that I should enter the grammarians' ancient forest of dense thickets in order to gather for you all the best sorts of the different fruits and the scattered perfumes of the various flowers, which can be found dispersed here and there throughout the grammarians' glades.[9]

As Law has shown in her study of this preface, Wynfrith presented his work as that of a florilegist, whose duty was to exercise his judgment on behalf of students faced with too much grammatical information, much of it conflicting.[10] Originality is precisely what this task is not about: behind his protestations that his book contains not a single rule without firm roots in ancient grammatical texts seems to lie an anxiety about the diversity produced by time and distance, a concern that pervaded the thought of Wynfrith the West Saxon grammarian as much as it did that of Boniface the Continental church reformer. In all instances, the only solution was adherence to church doctrine:

> But when I have perceived that the authorities in grammar were promulgating conflicting rules, which undoubtedly they often did, I thought it excessive and absurd that when Donatus and Priscian, Romanus and Velius Longus quarreled – the rhetors most learned in the eloquence of Roman urbanity – that I, born of ignoble stock among the peoples in the farthest reaches of Germania, should like a rustic shepherd bursting out of a thornbush or reedbed act as judge between the conflicting decrees of such men. So, in the case of each rule, I have above all preferred that whose path I have found to be most-trod by approved writers of the Church in holy writings and my daily readings.[11]

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9 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 9: "…ut antiquam perplexae siluam densitatis grammaticorum ingrederer ad colligendum tibi diuersorum optima quaeque genera pomorum et uariorum odoramenta florum diffusa, quae passim dispersa per saltum grammaticorum inueniuntur."

10 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 179–80. Along with its perceptive discussion, Law's chapter on Wynfrith's preface to Sigeberht presents the full text of the preface with an English translation.

11 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 10: "Quando autem auctores grammaticae artis quasdam regulas dissonas depromsisse cernebam, quod frequenter eos fecisse non dubitatur, superfluum esse et inrisione dignum arbitrabar, Donato et Prisciano, Romano et Velio Longo dissentientibus, Romanae urbanitatis facundia dissertissimis rethoribus, me paene de extremis Germaniae gentibus ignobile stirpe procreatum, ueluti agrestem pastorem de spineto uel arundineto erumpentem, inter talium dissona decreta uirorum ex persona iudicis disputanda iudicare. Verum in unaquaque regula illum praeeligens maxime sequi uisus sum, cuius uestigia ab ecclesiasticis dogmatistis frequentissime trita in sacrosanctis tractatibus et cotidianae lectionis usitata repperi."

Wynfrith presents his treatise as a kind of "Judgment of Paris" gone right, in which humility and adherence to written doctrine at last settle the quarrels of the gods. His list of authorities includes two, Donatus and Priscian, whose names were almost synonymous with grammar, and whose works he undoubtedly used; yet he either did not have or did not actually use the writings of Romanus and Velius Longus: that of Romanus may in fact have been lost in antiquity.[12] When viewed in the context of the treatise's emphasis on the *Romana urbanitas* of these writers, we must conclude that Wynfrith chose these names for their sound: what name could be more Roman than Romanus? The result is a striking dynamic of authority. Wynfrith presents himself as a Germanic peasant utterly unqualified to decide between the rules the learned men of Rome devised for their own language. And yet these wise pagans could not agree; a Germanic reader *is*, after all, qualified to judge, by studying and adhering to approved Christian writings. Though the source of authority remains firmly in Rome, knowledge of scripture allows those on the periphery to absorb and assume that authority.

Strikingly, the authors to which Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica* acts as a guide range well beyond the biblical and patristic. He preserves his sources' quotations from Virgil, Cicero, and Terence, for instance, rather than replacing them entirely with Christian sources; indeed, Virgil is the literary authority most often cited in his text.[13] In his preface, Wynfrith expresses an intention to include archaisms:

> The practices of ancient writers, who can be seen to adhere to very different practices in their eloquence than modern urbanity approves as canonical, I shall sometimes touch on briefly, so that whenever you come across something of this sort in the course of the scriptures, breaking the rules of modern usage, you will know how to take it, or for what reason to reject it.[14]

His phrasing here is very reminiscent of Bede's discussion of archaic usages in his *De arte metrica*; in both, there seems to be a strong implication that archaic

12 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 176.

13 Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, 300; Yann Coz, "Saint Boniface, la grammaire et l'histoire," in *Rerum gestarum scriptor: Histoire et historiographie au Moyen Âge. Mélanges Michel Sot*, eds. Magali Coumert et al. (Paris: 2012), 56–57.

14 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 9: "Priscorum quippe consuetudines, qui multa aliter in eloquentia obseruasse dinoscuntur quam moderna urbanitas canonicum esse adprobat, ex latere quodammodo tangebam, ut, quandocumque tale aliquid in tramite scripturarum moderni usus regulis refragans nanciscaris, scias, quo pacto percipias uel quo ritu recuses."

usage is associated with pagan error, and that with the adoption of Christianity has come an improvement in language itself.[15] Yet Wynfrith's actual selection of archaisms shows that he had a rather different purpose in mind, and that his phrase "quo pacto percipias" does not simply mean "how you might understand" such usages, but also "how you might take them up" – how his recipient might adopt them in his own writings. For Law has shown that the most common archaisms discussed in Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica* are those adopted by the distinctly modern writer Aldhelm.[16] Moreover, the very limited number of paradigms for regular forms, together with occasional directions for use, suggest that Boniface intended his book "not for beginners […] but for more advanced students such as the monks and nuns whose correspondence with him has come down to us, people who wanted an active command of the language."[17] Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica* can thus be characterized as a practical handbook for composition in a contemporary style of Latin: a style whose modernity was, paradoxically, marked by the Virgilian archaisms particularly favoured by the Anglo-Latin writer Aldhelm.

Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica* also reveals a strong interest in the limits of paradigms:

> …it is apparent that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between endings and grammatical genders: such that there are certain masculine-seeming forms with a feminine force, and on the other hand some feminine-seeming forms with masculine force; some neuter-seeming forms with feminine meaning, and others shifting in other sorts of ways…[18]

Throughout the text, and not only in his discussion of nouns, Wynfrith is careful to indicate when words seem to slip through categories, describing both what they appear to be and what they are, and providing rules for apparent irregularities. He draws upon Aldhelm to show how spelling changes caused by prefixes mask etymological connections, and on the Late Antique grammarian

15 On Bede's views on this point, see Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 185–87.

16 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 178, 192–93.

17 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 106–07, 182–84 (quote at 184).

18 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 11: "…singulae terminationes nominum paene singulis generibus congruere uidentur – sicut sunt quaedam specie masculina sensu feminina, quaedam e contrario specie feminina uirtute masculina, quaedam specie neutra intellectu feminina et cetera quaquauersum se uertentia."

Phocas to group nouns whose endings might give a misleading sense of their grammatical gender.[19] Through Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica*, a reader of Latin would come to perceive that the exceptions that seem to proliferate could, with study and experience, be resolved into a comprehensible and thoroughly rule-governed structure.

Together with its prefatory material, then, Wynfrith's grammar provides an insider's view of the state of Latin learning in early 8th-century England. As he saw it, the problem faced by would-be readers was not lack of instructional material, but lack of a coherent framework for assessing such material's relevance and authority, and for sensibly applying the pagan grammarians' strictures to the writings of biblical, Late Antique, and contemporary Christian authors. This was a challenge recognized, it seems, by many 7th- and 8th-century English scholars, but the range of responses visible in the surviving texts from this period suggests that no consensus on method had as yet emerged. For instance, Tætwine, who seems to have been writing a treatise on the eight parts of speech at Breedon-on-the-Hill in Mercia at about the same time that Wynfrith was writing his in Wessex, elected to include far more examples and full paradigms, making it both more suitable for beginning students, and more capable of replacing, rather than supplementing, the earlier grammars it draws upon.[20] Just as they differed in method, Tætwine and Wynfrith also seem to have had a quite different range of sources available to them, with only a few nearly universal texts (such as Donatus and Priscian) in common.[21] From this we can gather that, while the early English grammarians shared similar problems, they seem not to have often been able to draw upon their contemporaries' knowledge for solutions. Many factors may have contributed to this, including the ideal of monastic *stabilitas* and the practical and political difficulties of travel outside one's home region, but the result seems to be that men like Wynfrith, working in relative isolation, had mainly themselves and their locally available books and friends to rely on. Though drawn together from the words of others, then, Wynfrith's *Ars grammatica* emerged directly from his perception of his students' needs and from his own ingenuity.

19 George John Gebauer, "Prolegomena to the *Ars Grammatica Bonifatii*," PhD Diss. (University of Chicago: 1940), 88–91, 76–78.

20 The standard edition is *Tatuini Opera Omnia: Ars Tatuini*, ed. Maria De Marco, CCSL 133 (Turnhout: 1968).

21 Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 109–10.

3 Manifestations of Hidden Form: *Versibus en iuuenis* and *Caesurae versuum*

A notable piece of evidence suggests that Wynfrith's inventiveness was also exercised upon literary form: prefaced to the *Ars grammatica* was a remarkable figured poem currently called *Versibus en iuuenis*, now found only in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek MS M.p.th.f. 29, a 9th-century codex from Mainz.[22] Though it has been separated from its companion texts, we can be certain that it was Wynfrith's work, and that it was intended to accompany the *Ars grammatica*. The poem contains an acrostic and an intext, that is, an inscription formed by letters within verses, rather than at their beginnings or ends. Embedded as both an acrostic and intext are the lines "Vynfreth priscorum Duddo congesserat artem / uiribus ille iugis iuuauit in arte magistrum," meaning "Wynfrith assembled the art of the ancients with (*or* for) Duddo; with all his might he always helped the teacher in the art." The *Ars grammatica's* prefatory letter to Sigeberht describes this complex form:

> Also, at the beginning of this work I put a squared circle, containing at its centre the figure of the Holy Cross bearing "Jesus Christ," whose border is inscribed with a playfully bending intext of two verses, running alternately perpendicular, on each side presenting a cycle of letters naming my companion in labor.[23]

That is to say, the two verses run at the sides of the block of text in acrostic and telestich, and again as a mesostich through the text in the form of a diamond, in the exact centre of which is a cross on which "Iesus Xristus" runs both horizontally within a normal line and vertically as an intext, intersecting at the Greek letter Chi. Inspired by the Late Antique verse of Publilius Optatianus

22 Edited in Gebauer and Löfstedt, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, 4–6 (with a plate of the manuscript opposite page 2); and more recently, together with a full study, in David A.E. Pelteret, "A Cross and an Acrostic: Boniface's Prefatory Poem to his *Ars grammatica*," in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World: Studies to Honor the Memory of Timothy Reuter*, eds. Sarah Larratt et al. (Morgantown, WV: 2010), 53–102, with an edition and translation at 89–94 and manuscript images at 101–02.

23 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 11: "Interea circulum quadrangulum in fronte huius laboris apposui, in medio figuram sanctae crucis continentem, 'Iesus Christus' exprimentem, qui ludiuaga sermonum serie duobus ambitus uersibus, aliis in transuersum currentibus, socialis adiutorii utrimque sonantes in obuiam offert litteras."

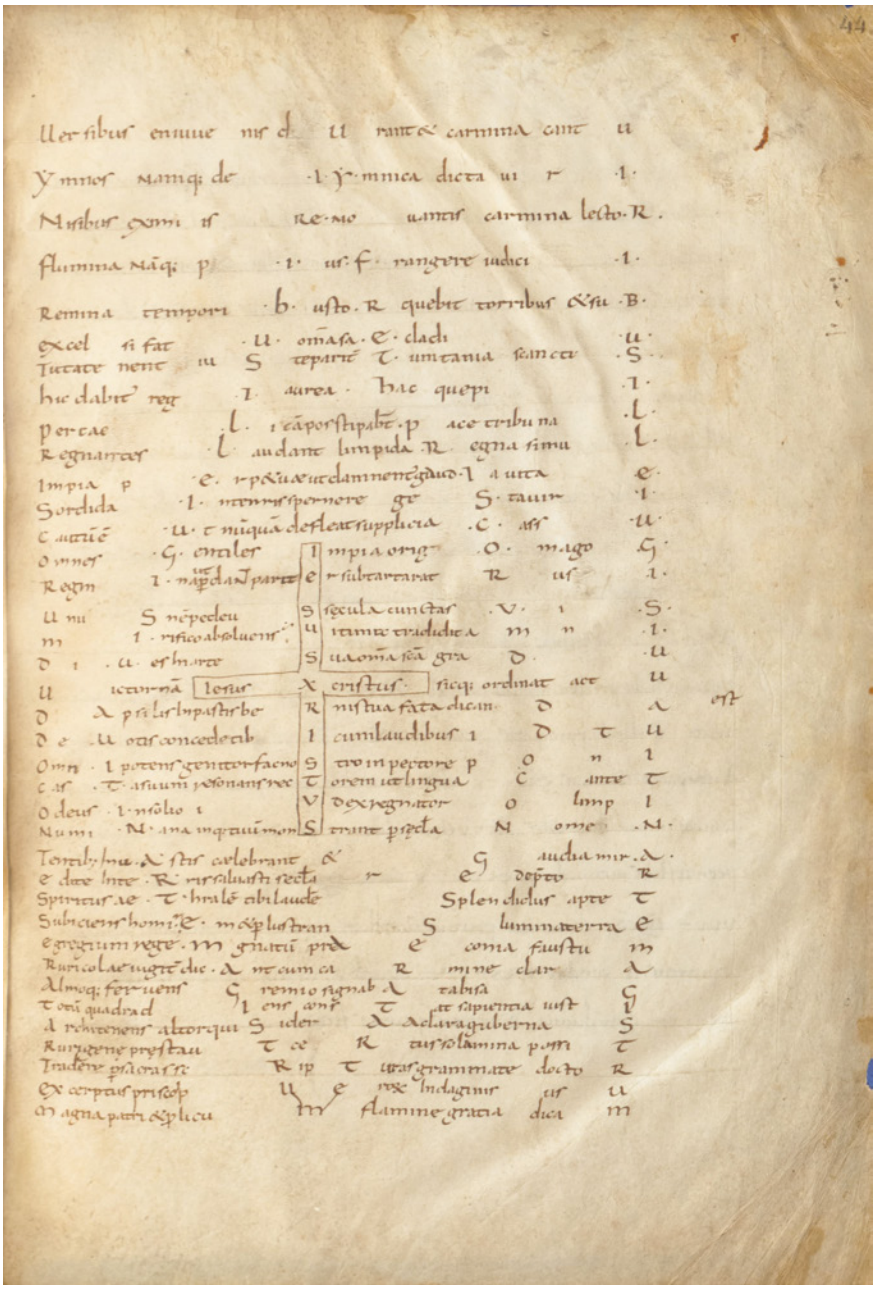

ILLUSTRATION 5.1 Figured poem *Versibus en iuuenis*, preface to Boniface's *Ars grammatica.* Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek M.p.th. f. 29, fol. 44r, 9th century

Porphyrius, complex figured poetry enjoyed a vogue in early Anglo-Saxon England; Aldhelm, for instance, devised prefaces for his *Enigmata* and *Carmen de uirginitate* with acrostic and telestich inscriptions.[24] But to the best of our knowledge, no other early Anglo-Latin poet attempted anything as ambitious as Boniface's "squared circle." To this already extremely difficult form is superadded another layer of metrical difficulty:

> You should not be unaware that this circle is figured as a type of the Old and New Testament. For the first part of the circle, up to the middle of the cross, runs along interlarded with interspersed pentameter verses: which, although they do not swim along with prosaic oar, nonetheless are recognized as not heroic, and not fully perfect in their course. Just so within the bounds of the Old Testament all things, as it were partial and imperfect, were directed toward the fulfillment of the Law: which is to say, toward Christ crucified. After the aforementioned cross, however, within the circle the verses run on in heroic, complete form. So likewise, through the grace of Christ accepted for the remission of sins, all things are renewed and perfected in wholeness.[25]

Boniface, then, has freighted the metre of his poem with allegorical meaning that enables his verses to re-enact the form of the Bible itself. While this device may have been borrowed from Venantius Fortunatus,[26] Boniface's use of it is unique. Readers could not recognize the poem's bipartite nature and the "incompleteness" of its first half by reading the content alone; like the allegorical

24 For more on Porphyrius' influence on Boniface's form, see Pelteret, "Cross and Acrostic," 55, and Marcos Garcia, "Poetry and the Past in Anglo-Saxon England," PhD Diss. (University of California at Berkeley: 2015), 179–90. Figured poetry enjoyed a revival under the Carolingians: it is worth noting that Hrabanus Maurus, author of the spectacular verse paintings of *De laudibus sanctae crucis*, was a monk of the Bonifatian foundation of Fulda and a successor of Boniface in the archbishopric of Mainz.

25 Praefatio, *Bonifatii ars grammatica*, eds. Gebauer and Löfstedt, 11: "Hunc autem circulum in scemate noui ac ueteris instrumenti figurari non nescias. Nam prior pars circuli huius usque ad medium crucis quibusdam pentametris intersertis decurrens pinguitur uersibus. Qui licet <non> pedestri remigio tranent, non tamen heroici nec omnino perfecti decursi esse noscuntur. Sic et intra terminos ueteris testamenti universa quasi semiplena et inperfecta tendebant ad plenitudinem legis, id est ad Christum crucifixum. Post crucem autem supradictam in circulo heroici uersus et perfecti decursant. Ita et per gratiam Christi accepta remissione peccatorum ad integrum omnia renouata et perfecta sunt."

26 Garcia, "Poetry and the Past," 187.

reading it represents, it lies latent, awaiting the educated reader. Metre thus symbolizes spiritual meaning.

The poem may have served to exercise its readers' discernment at a more practical level as well. Pelteret has pointed out that some of the more unusual vocabulary in *Versibus en iuuenis* exemplifies Boniface's focus in his grammar on words that seem to defy the rules of their paradigms: in particular, *ruricolae* (31) and *rurigenae* (35) are first-declension nouns, but masculine, rather than the expected feminine.[27] In this ambitious, complex prefatory poem, Boniface allows diligent re-readers of his text to use and savour the knowledge they have gained.

One further, somewhat enigmatic piece of evidence suggests an attempt on Wynfrith-Boniface's part to systematize some of his thought on metre. Attributed to Boniface in only one manuscript – the codex Vatican City, Palat. lat. 1753, ca. 800 and originally from Lorsch – the brief metrical text usually titled *Caesurae uersuum* ("the caesurae of verses") is a condensation of information about metrical feet, caesurae, and literary form.[28] Like the *Ars grammatica*, it is an assemblage of excerpts from older sources, and its particular character emerges from its overall shape and structure. Relying principally on Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and containing only three actual examples, the *Caesurae uersuum* is clearly intended not as a practical manual for scansion, but as a compact source for literary terminology.

Definition and classification are thus the book's organizing principles. *Caesurae uersuum* is divided into three sections. The first, which lacks a separate title, focuses on the internal structure of metrical feet. After defining accent, arsis, and thesis, the section goes on to classify feet according to the quantitative balance between the arsis and thesis, enumerating those whose parts are temporally equal (such as the dactyl or spondee); those in which one part is twice the length of the other (such as the trochee or iamb); and proceeding to more complex feet, with a 3:2 or 4:2 ratio. This section is mainly pieced together from parts of Book I of the *Etymologiae*; however, its definition of arsis and thesis as "uocis eleuatio cum temporibus" and "uocis positio cum temporibus" (the raising/lowering of the voice with duration in time) is curiously difficult to source, though it may be derived from Pompeius' commentary on Donatus, or from Isidore's discussion of music in Book III.[29] Overall, the

27 Pelteret, "Cross and Acrostic," 70–71.

28 The standard edition of *Caesurae uersuum* is that by Bengt Löfstedt, included as an appendix in his CCSL edition of the *Ars grammatica* at 101–13.

29 *Caesurae uersuum*, ed. Löfstedt, 111; Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 109.

passage's implication seems to be that stress-accent is more intimately related to metrical foot structure than it actually is in Latin, and one wonders if interlingual factors were at play.

In the next two sections – titled *De caesuris* and *De metris* in most manuscripts – the text moves from a relatively straightforward fourfold classification of types of caesurae to a more heterogeneous collection of terms. Rather than listing metres, *De metris* begins with a definition and brief history of metre itself, as contrasted with prose (woven together from Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.38 and 39, seemingly with some elements of III.17). By far the longest portion, however, is occupied by a discussion of dactylic hexameter verse: we are told (again following Isidore) that this form "is superior to other metres: alone among them all it has seemed appropriate for the greatest works, equally capable of severity and sweetness."[30] As in Isidore, the dactylic hexameter is given Biblical roots. The remainder of *De metris* is a set of brief definitions of literary terms, although the principle of selection and organization is unclear: for instance, *clausula* is followed by *senarii* and then *solutio* (resolution), at which point the text begins to be derived from Servius' *Centimetrum* rather than Isidore.

Given the ambiguity of its attributions in the manuscripts, it is quite possible that the *Caesurae uersuum* is not Wynfrith's work at all; it is too brief and too verbally derivative to be certain.[31] While this somewhat enigmatic text draws directly on a relatively small number of sources, it is far from a straightforward florilegium or abbreviation of Isidore, and further study of its structure may reveal more about its purpose. Its overall tendency is a movement from small-scale (the stress and foot) through the medium (divisions of verses) and then to the large (metre and genre). There is also a decided emphasis on the dactylic hexameter, and an evident intent to collect in one place terms useful for those seeking to scan and describe poems. The latter qualities are certainly consonant both with Anglo-Latin thought about poetry – both Aldhelm and Bede also praised the hexameter, for instance – but are also common to Late Antique and early medieval writings more generally. Even if Wynfrith did not write it, then, the *Caesurae uersuum* is thus a useful source of insight into the way that he was likely to have thought about the inner workings of verse.

30 *Caesurae uersuum*, ed. Löfstedt, 111: "cetera metra praecedit: unum ex omnibus tam maximis operibus aptum apparuisse grauitatisque ac dulcedinis aeque capax." Cf. *Etymologiae* I.39.9, where Isidore follows up "tam maximis" with "quam paruis" (suitable as much for great works as small ones).

31 *Caesurae uersuum*, ed. Löfstedt, 105; Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 108. Besides the attribution to Boniface in Palat. lat. 1753, no author is given in two of the four manuscripts, and the fourth ascribes the text to Mallius Theodorus.

4 Wynfrith's Teaching in England and Beyond

According to Willibald, Wynfrith's success as a teacher was rapid and widespread:

> …his fame shone most openly throughout monasteries of both men and maidens of Christ: of whom indeed many, strengthened by the vigour of the male sex and inspired by zeal for reading, converged upon him, and, drinking from a most wholesome well of knowledge, read through many volumes of scriptures. As for those to whom the sex of weaker fragility appertained and in whom the capacity for assiduous application was lacking: inspired by the spirit of divine love, they caused the man of such wisdom to be manifested to them, and, perusing a succession of pages, engaged closely with them through heavenly inquiry and constantly contemplated the arcana of the sacraments and the concealed elements of the divine services.[32]

Grammatica could have been only one part of such an educational enterprise. Exposition of the Bible and sacraments, as Willibald makes clear, was also a major part of Wynfrith's teaching, and inseparable from his career as a preacher. But it is revealing that study of the elements of language, both syntax and sound, remained central to Wynfrith's work. Like Aldhelm, Bede, Tætwine, and Alcuin, he inhabited a tradition that considered mastery of Latin indispensable, and the teaching of language to be the responsibility of the best scholars.

While Willibald's emphasis on Wynfrith's physical separation from his female students was no doubt partly inspired by a desire to represent his subject as morally irreproachable, his description of Wynfrith teaching women via letters also expands our notion of what the early English might have considered instruction. For instance, Abbess Eangyth of Thanet and her daughter and successor Bugga (Heahburg) were longstanding correspondents of Boniface, although it is not altogether clear whether they met in person, at least

32 Willibald, *VB* c. 2, 10–11: "fama eius multis per monasteria tam virorum quam etiam virginum Christi apertissime claruit: quorum quidem quam plurimi, virili sexus robore confortati et lectionis instantia incitati, ad eum confluxere et, saluberrimum scientiae fontem potantes, numerosa scripturarum volumina legendo recensere. Quibus ergo sexus infirmioris inbecillitatis inerat et adsidua pergendi abnegabatur facultas, tantae sibi sapientiae virum, divini inflatae spiritu amoris, praesentari fecerunt, paginarumque seriem transcurrentes, celesti instanter scrutinio inhesere et sacramentorum archana mysteriorumque abdita iugiter meditantur."

in England.[33] When Bugga wrote to Boniface requesting scriptural excerpts, she seems to have been requesting intellectual as well as spiritual guidance. Such collations may have been one way that Wynfrith could serve as a teacher for cloistered women.[34] Possibly they were even accompanied by commentaries excerpted from the Church Fathers.[35] The letters Wynfrith himself sent were, moreover, likely to have been used by their recipients as patterns of Latin composition, and he may possibly have corrected the grammar of the letters sent to him. The nun Leofgyth, for instance, asks Boniface to "deign to correct the rusticity of [her] letter" and "not to refuse to send [her] some of [his] grace's words as an example."[36] Given the pre-Conquest tendency to collapse the distinction between physical and textual presence, it may be that many of those who considered themselves Wynfrith's students saw him in the flesh only briefly, if at all, and yet remained deeply affected by his influence in the form of his letters.[37]

The bonds Wynfrith formed through such instruction, whether in person or by correspondence, seem to have been long-lasting, and helped sustain his missionary work. We know nothing of the later career of Nithard, a young student to whom Wynfrith sent a floridly Aldhelmian letter exhorting him to the pursuit of wisdom.[38] But Duddo, the student whose help writing the *Ars grammatica* he acknowledged in *Versibus en iuuenis*, seems to have gone on to an abbacy, perhaps at Nursling: Boniface later wrote to him requesting books and research assistance.[39] The nun Egburg referred to herself as Wynfrith's student

33 Bugga made a pilgrimage to Rome (rather against Boniface's inclinations: see Tangl, no. 27), and according to a letter of King Æthelbert of Kent, she and Boniface visited churches together there (Tangl, no. 105).

34 Tangl, no. 15, 27: "dirige meę […] congregationes aliquas sanctarum scripturarum" (send to me some excerpts from the holy scriptures).

35 We have no known evidence of such excerpts being sent to women, but Boniface and his companions did use collections of patristic excerpts in the course of their missionary work, and indeed Boniface himself seems to have considered the rejection of patristic authority in scriptural interpretation as tantamount to heresy: see Sven Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy of Clemens," *Church History* 80 (2011), 261–65. It seems likely, then, that Boniface would have directly or indirectly promoted patristic authority in teaching scripture to others.

36 Tangl, no. 29, 53: "ut rusticitatem huius epistolę digneris emendare et mihi aliqua verba tuae affabilitatis exempli gratia transmittere non recusses."

37 See Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 128–35.

38 Tangl, no. 9. The letter ends with a poem in rhythmic octosyllables containing Nithard's name in acrostic: for more on this poem, see Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1994), 61–63.

39 Tangl, no. 34. It should be noted that this identification is not certain: Dudda was not an uncommon English name. Nor is it clear whether the Abbot "Duddus" to whom Boniface

and addressed him as a kinsman; Bugga and her mother Eangyth, who supplied him with books and vestments, also emphasized their familial affection.[40] It is in these and similar letters, exchanged between England and the Continent, that we see one of the most important legacies of Wynfrith's career as a monastic teacher in England. For the early English as well as for other early medieval people, teaching generated a kind of familial relationship: that Wynfrith, as Archbishop Boniface, was able to mobilize so many such relationships in service of an enterprise as difficult, dangerous, and expensive as his Continental mission is in itself testimony to his skill as a teacher.

5 Fruit of Gold and Venom: Boniface's *Enigmata*

Intimately connected to Boniface's work both as a preacher and a grammarian is a collection of twenty verse *enigmata* on the virtues and vices.[41] Although – like the *Caesurae uersuum* – this text is credited to him in only one manuscript, this attribution seems secure.[42] The *enigmata* are deeply characteristic both of early Anglo-Latin literary culture in general, and of Boniface's particular preoccupations: taken as a group, they offer a striking insight into practices of reading and poetic composition in the early 8th century.

Literary riddles were a fashionable form in England of the 7th and 8th centuries, especially among monastic teachers. Substantial collections of Latin *enigmata* are attributed to Aldhelm, abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne; Tætwine, a priest from the Mercian house of Breedon-on-Hill who became archbishop of Canterbury; "Eusebius," who may or may not have been

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wrote is identical with the Abbot Dud or Dudd, who witnessed two charters to landgrants in Somerset and Devon in the second quarter of the 8th century: see the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (www.pase.ac.uk), s.v. Duddo 1 and Dudda 2. If the two are the same, then Duddo's abbey may have been farther west than Nursling.

40 See Tangl, no. 13 and no. 15; for more on these women, see Felice Lifshitz' chapter in this volume.

41 The standard edition has been Glorie (ed.), *Collectiones aenigmatum Merouingicae aetatis*. However, Andy Orchard has prepared a new edition with translation and commentary, which is forthcoming from Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library as *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition*. I am grateful to him for allowing me to use his text in advance of publication.

42 As noted by Ernst Dümmler: see his edition in MGH PLAC I (Berlin: 1881), 1. It is unclear when and where the *Enigmata* were written. Schüling, however, makes a compelling case for the earlier part of Boniface's career (i.e., the 720s at latest) based on verbal similarities to letters written before 720: Hermann Schüling, "Die Handbibliothek des Bonifatius," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 4 (1961), 290–91, n. 39.

Hwætbert, abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow; and Alcuin of York, who went on to become Abbot of Tours and an advisor to Charlemagne.[43] Of these, the riddles of Aldhelm, Tætwine, and Eusebius were, like Boniface's, in dactylic hexameters; and Aldhelm, Tætwine, and Alcuin – again like Boniface – also wrote treatises on grammar or elementary versification. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that these collections are often playful explorations of the stranger facets of Latin grammar and exegesis. Even when not explicitly taking as their topic matters like "the fourfold sense of scripture" or "prepositions that take two cases," the *enigmata* depended on their readers' interest in Latin words and (often Isidorean) etymology.[44]

Boniface's *enigmata* are both of, and apart from, this Old English tradition. On the one hand, the influence of Aldhelm's verse pervades that of his West Saxon countryman at every level. As Andy Orchard has shown, Boniface's riddles rely to an exceptionally high degree on spliced-together phrases from Aldhelm's poems – primarily the *Carmen de uirginitate*, but also the *Enigmata* and, to a lesser extent, the *Carmina ecclesiastica*.[45] This has often led to metrical problems.[46] False quantities are a problem for Boniface, but so too are word-boundaries: he made unusually frequent use of both elision and hiatus in his *Enigmata*.[47] While these peculiarities make Boniface's *Enigmata* a rather perilous model for would-be poets, they exemplify a habit of thought common among early Anglo-Latin poets, which may have been derived from Old English compositional practices. As Lapidge and Orchard have shown, these poets conceived of the Latin hexameter line as a grid onto which words and phrases – often absorbed from earlier verse – could be mapped in relatively fixed patterns, giving their verse a highly formulaic character.[48] Aldhelm explains this method in his metrical textbook, which gives lists of words that fit particular

43 For an overview of the riddle tradition, see Andy Orchard, "Enigma Variations: The Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Tradition," in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, eds. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, vol. II (Toronto: 2005), 284–304.

44 Many of the riddles of "Eusebius" are in fact versified excerpts from Isidore's *Etymologiae*; but for more subtle use of Isidore's methods in Aldhelm, see Nicholas Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorean Etymology," *ASE* 14 (1985), 37–59. For more on the connection between *enigmata* and teaching, see Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 52–60.

45 Orchard, *Poetic Art,* 248–53, 284–86: Orchard's data (in his Appendix 5.1) show reminiscences of Aldhelm's *Carmina ecclesiastica* III, IV, and V, but not others.

46 See now Orchard's commentary in *The Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition* (forthcoming), which includes a thorough metrical analysis.

47 Orchard, *Poetic Art*, 251–52.

48 Michael Lapidge, "Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse," in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600–899* (London: 1996), 247–69; Orchard, *Poetic Art*.

foot structures together with one hundred hexametrical *Enigmata* exemplifying his principles.[49] Since verbal reminiscences demonstrate that Boniface had read Aldhelm's *Enigmata*, it seems likely that he also knew the rest of his predecessor's metrical treatise, and indeed may have brought a copy of it to the Continent. Certainly, Aldhelm's *De metris* was actively used in teaching at this period: as Orchard has shown, Leofgyth (or Leoba, of Wimbourne, Thanet and, later, Tauberbischofsheim) confected the letter and verses she sent to Boniface largely from this treatise.[50] Leofgyth attributed her knowledge of Latin verse to the teaching of Eadburg, abbess at Minster-in-Thanet, herself one of Boniface's most important correspondents. It seems likely, then, that the modular method described and exemplified in Aldhelm's works was consistent with both teaching and practice at many monastic houses in the south of England, and was exported to the Continent by Boniface, Leofgyth, and their compatriots. The texture and peculiar faults of Boniface's *Enigmata*, with its strong reliance on borrowed and repeated (Aldhelmian) phraseology and frequent difficulty in fitting phrases together in the hexameter line, thus give us an insight into the typical products of an early Anglo-Latin literary education.

Other elements of Boniface's *Enigmata* seem to be inspired by Aldhelm's example, although developed in different ways. The acrostic, as discussed earlier, was a favorite form of Aldhelm's; but while the earlier poet had built acrostics and telestichs into the preface to his *enigmata*, Boniface left his prefaces unadorned and instead encoded the solutions into each of his twenty riddles. While none of the acrostics in the *Enigmata* approach the complexity of the intexts in *Versibus en iuuenis*, that of "Caritas" ("Divine Love") is the most elaborate, with an entwined double solution spelling CARITAS forward on the odd lines and backward on the even ones. This is probably intended to signify an endless circle, as the final lines suggest:

> Arbiter aetherius condit me calce carentem,
> In qua nec metas aevi nec tempora clausit,
> Tempora sed mire sine tempore longa creavit.[51]

49 The metrical treatises are edited in R. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, MGH AA XV (Berlin: 1919). Significant portions are translated, with essential commentary, in Michael Lapidge and James Rosier with Neil Wright, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge: 1985); see esp. 21–24 and 183–90.

50 Andy Orchard, "Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface," *ASE* 30 (2001), 29–32; the letter in question is Tangl, no. 29.

51 Orchard, (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition* (forthcoming), Boniface Enigma 5.

> [The heavenly ordainer established without an endpoint me in whom he has closed up no limit of life nor of due seasons, but marvellously created long ages without age.]

As we see here, with the final lines of the *Caritas* riddle spelling *ait* ("said"), the acrostics often contain a verb of speech: for instance, *IUSTITIA DIXIT* ("Justice said") or *EBRIETAS DICEBAT* ("Drunkenness was saying"). The *Enigmata* are thus figured as a series of monologues by allegorical women. While these encoded attributions obviate the need for readers' guesswork (though not hearers'), they do defend the works from being stripped of their solutions or having wrong ones applied – a fate that, as Orchard has pointed out, often befell riddle collections, and which might have worrisome doctrinal consequences if virtues and vices became confounded.[52]

As with many of the early collections of *enigmata*, the overall structure of Boniface's *Enigmata* is clearly planned, even if the reasons for individual juxtapositions are sometimes obscure. Ten virtues are balanced by ten vices; the preface – which is precisely twenty lines long – compares the virtues to "aurea … poma … quae in ligno vitae crescebant floribus almis" (1–2: "golden apples which grew with holy flowers upon the tree of life"), while the vices are "alia alterius ligni acervissima mala,/ pestifero vernant quae in ligno mortis amarae" (11–12: "different, sourest fruits of the other tree, which grow upon the baleful wood of bitter death"). Does this mean that each vice is to be counterbalanced by a corresponding virtue, as in Prudentius' *Psychomachia*?[53] To answer such a question would require certainty about the order of the riddles, which – as is common in such collections – varies significantly between manuscripts. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 give the two best-attested arrangements:[54]

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52 Orchard, "Enigma Variations," 285.

53 Aldhelm's *Carmen de uirginitate* also contains a "Psychomachia" passage, but the war is somewhat less symmetrical, with Virginity fighting a multitude of vices. Interestingly, the description Boniface gave of the vision of an anonymous monk of Much Wenlock also depicted a battle of personified virtues and vices, which implied symmetry without precisely depicting it. Tangl, no. 10: "sic unaquae que virtus contra emulum suum peccatum excussando me clamitabat" (thus each virtue cried out against its rival vice in order to excuse me).

54 For more on the manuscripts, see Orchard, *Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition*, and Glorie, "Aenigmata Bonifatii," 274–77. My Tables 1 and 2 are compiled from Glorie's chart on p. 275. It should be noted that these groupings do not reflect textual affiliations. The text in the Einsiedeln manuscript is more closely related to the Vatican manuscript than to the Cambridge one: see Chauncey E. Finch, "The Text of the *Aenigmata* of Boniface in Codex Reg. Lat. 1553," *Manuscripta* 6 (1962), 23–28.

TABLE 5.1 Boniface's *Enigmata* in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, 735C (*s.* xi), and Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1553 (*s.* ix)

Virtues	**Vices**
1. veritas	11. negligentia
2. fides catholica	12. iracundia
3. spes	13. cupiditas
4. misericordia	14. superbia
5. caritas	15. crapula gulae
6. iustitia	16. ebrietas
7. patientia	17. luxoria
8. pax uera cristiana	18. inuidia
9. humilitas cristiana	19. ignorantia
10. uirginitas	20. vana gloria

The order in Table 5.1 is attested by the earliest manuscript; however, the Table 5.1 manuscripts do not contain the prologue, while those attesting the order in Table 5.2 do. Internal evidence for the structure is equally ambiguous, since both orders – like the riddles themselves – are in dialogue with the same texts, especially I Corinthians 13 and Psalm 84:11–12, and each can be justified theologically.[55] This leaves editors with something of a dilemma: Glorie and Orchard have preferred the first arrangement, while Dümmler printed the second. Each order generates new symmetries. The position of "Virginitas" and "Vana Gloria" in the first arrangement, for instance, highlights both riddles' intense focus on adornment and the different purposes to which each puts this imagery; while in the second order, the balancing of "Iustitia" against "Iracundia" deepens the fire metaphor that appears in each. This peculiar ability to generate new significance as the text is reordered is a direct function of the symmetry encoded in the collection and its unity of concept, both of which are unique among the Anglo-Latin riddle collections. Like the encoded acrostic solutions, the meaningful malleability of Boniface's *Enigmata* shows a profound understanding of manuscript culture, and an ingenious ability to harness the changes wrought by recopying.

55 See esp. 1 Cor 13:13: "nunc autem manet fides spes caritas, tria haec: maior autem his est caritas" (yet now abide faith, hope, love, these three: but the greatest of these is love) and Ps 84:11: "misericordia et veritas obviaverunt sibi: iustitia et pax osculatae sunt" (mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed).

TABLE 5.2 Boniface's *Enigmata* in Einsiedeln, Bibliotheca monasterii, 302 (*s.* x), and Cambridge, University Library, Gg.5.35 (*s.* xi)[a]

Virtues	Vices
1. caritas	11. ignorantia
2. fides catholica	12. vana gloria
3. spes	13. negligentia
4. iustitia	14. iracundia
5. veritas	15. cupiditas
6. misericordia	16. superbia
7. patientia	17. crapula gulae
8. pax uera cristiana	18. ebrietas
9. humilitas cristiana	19. luxoria
10. uirginitas	20. inuidia

a The virtues also appear in this order in London, British Library, Royal 15.B.xix (*s.* x), which however does not contain the text of the vices.

Intense readerly engagement seems to be a basic expectation of the *Enigmata*, which begin with the line "Aurea nam decem transmisi poma sorori" (Prol. 1: "I sent ten golden apples to my sister"). We cannot be sure who this "sister" was, since Boniface addressed several of his female monastic correspondents as "soror,"[56] but it is clear that she was expected to actively contemplate the text:

> With these, you will take in the joys of the mind while having fun, and you will be filled with the sweetness of the life to come; while chewing, you will be inspired by the sweet drink of nectar.[57]

The metaphor of riddles-as-fruit to be chewed and eaten invokes the monastic practice of *ruminatio*, the "chewing-over" of texts to extract their spiritual nourishment that was normally accompanied by physical movement of the mouth.[58] The purpose of Boniface's *Enigmata* is thus rather different than that

56 As Orchard notes, Glorie's suggestion that Leofgyth was the sister in question "is attractive, but cannot be proven" (*Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition*, forthcoming).

57 Prol. 5–7: "Cum quibus et ludens conprendas gaudia mentis / Et tibi uenturae conplearis dulcedine uitae, / Manducans mulso inspireris nectaris haustu."

58 The classic description of this practice is Jean Leclerq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi, 2nd ed. (New York: 1974), 15–17 and 72–73.

of many other early medieval English riddle collections. Boniface's poems are not about words, intellectual puzzles, cryptograms, or the estrangement of everyday things; rather, they are meant to inspire feeling. The depictions of the virtues attract with sweetness while the vices repel with bitterness: morality thus becomes a matter of aesthetics.[59] As Boniface hints with phrases like "uenturae … dulcedine uitae" ("the sweetness of the life to come"), the experience of reading the *Enigmata* is meant to provide a momentary taste of divine transcendence.

6 *Grammatica* and the Bonifatian Mission

In 746, Pope Zachary responded to reports from Bavaria that Boniface had considered asking priests to rebaptize Christians who had previously been baptized using an erroneous, mangled version of the Latin baptismal formula: "'Baptizo te in nomine patria et filia et spiritus sancti'" ("I baptize you in the name with the Fatherland and the Daughter and the Holy Spirit").[60] Having thus been called upon to clarify the precise linguistic point at which innocent confusion shaded into damnable error, Pope Zachary wrote to Boniface that "if the ministrant introduced no error or heresy but simply through ignorance made a slip in the Latin language, then we cannot agree that the baptism should be repeated."[61] Though Boniface doubtless obeyed Zachary's request that he *not* rebaptize in the wake of his perplexed predecessor, it is difficult to believe that he wholeheartedly agreed with the pope's argument that heresy and grammatical ignorance were entirely distinct. The cultivation of knowledge was, for him, the heart of the missionary enterprise. Creating a durable infrastructure for Christian pastoral care and religious life in Germany was – as the essays in this volume show – a complex endeavour requiring tireless, lifelong administrative and diplomatic work from Boniface and his *familia*. Nevertheless, scholarship and study, founded on *grammatica*, remained an essential part of their lives; and a part of Boniface's legacy as a teacher endured in the books and people who embodied Latinate Christian literary culture for later generations.

59 For more on this metaphor see Mary Carruthers, "Sweetness," *Speculum* 81, no. 4 (2006), 999–1013.

60 Tangl, no. 68, 141.

61 Tangl, no. 68, 141: "Si ille, qui baptizavit, non errorem introducens aut heresim, sed pro sola ignorantia Romane locutionis infringendo linguam, ut supra fati sumus, baptizans dixisset, non possumus consentire, ut denuo baptizentur."

The books could never be taken for granted. Boniface's letters to England often contain requests for manuscripts, most of them for the mission's immediate needs, including biblical texts, canon law, and commentaries.[62] Lapidge's survey of books produced or owned by the English foundations in Germany indicates that their early libraries had a strongly pragmatic focus, with an emphasis on core patristic authors: Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and Isidore.[63] The same is true of the majority of Boniface's own books, which Schüling characterized as "the practical personal library of a tireless missionary and church reformer."[64] Acquiring and copying the books necessary for the study and promulgation of the Christian message remained the priority of Boniface's circle for the early decades of the mission.

This did not mean, however, that Boniface abandoned the teaching of grammar and poetry. Lull, one of his most enthusiastic disciples, attributed his knowledge of metre to Boniface's instruction, and devised acrostics that seem to reflect knowledge of *Versibus en iuuenis*.[65] Boniface almost certainly brought his grammar (and, probably, metrical treatise) with him when he left England for the final time in 718; all known copies of these texts were preserved on the Continent, although one early fragment of the *Ars grammatica* was likely copied in southern England.[66] Lull may thus have encountered his teacher's prefatory poem in the schoolroom, although it seems probable that Boniface taught, or made available, other acrostic poems including his own

62 For instance: Biblical texts (Tangl, no. 35, to Eadburg, asking for the epistles of Peter in gold letters; no. 63, to Daniel of Winchester, requesting an uncial or half-uncial manuscript of the prophets); canon law (no. 33, to Pehthelm of Whithorn, requesting Gregory's responses to Augustine); commentaries (no. 34, to Duddo, requesting commentaries on the Pauline epistles; nos. 75 and 76, to Ecgberht of York and Hwætberht of Wearmouth-Jarrow, requesting Bede's commentaries); and see also Tangl, no. 30 (thanking Eadburg for the gift of "holy books"). On the subject of books as gifts in the Boniface correspondence, see John-Henry Clay, "Gift-giving and Books in the Letters of St. Boniface and Lull," *Journal of Medieval History* 35, no. 4 (2009), 313–25.

63 Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2006), 80.

64 Schüling, "Handbibliothek des Bonifatius," 345: "Sie ist vielmehr *praktische Handbibliothek des unermüdlichen Missionars und Kirchenreformers*" (Schüling's emphasis).

65 Tangl, no. 98, 220: "Hanc itaque nuper metrice artis peritiam domini nostri omnium generalis meique specialis presulis venerandi Bonifacii sub magisterio dediceram." Although this letter has (like many) been anonymized, its attribution to Lull seems secure (see Tangl, no. 98, 218, n. 1). The elaborate acrostic verses described in the letter, however, have not survived.

66 On the manuscripts of the *Ars grammatica*, see Gebauer and Löfstedt, eds., *Ars Grammatica*, v–vii (and, for the *Ars metrica*, 105); Vivien Law, "The Transmission of the *Ars Bonifatii* and the *Ars Tatuini*," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 9 (1979), 281–88; and W.A. Eckhardt, "Das Kaufunger Fragment der Bonifatius-Grammatik," *Scriptorium* 23 (1969), 280–97.

riddles, Aldhelm's prefaces, and perhaps the "foursquare poem" *Iohannis celsi rimans misteria caeli*, which begins and ends with this line and is framed by it in acrostic and telestich, and which Boniface may have – at very least – copied himself.[67]

Such advanced training in literary studies would not have been a diversion from the core work of the mission, for there is good reason to believe that competence in Latin verse was considered a valuable skill in holders of high ecclesiastical office.[68] Bishops and abbots were often expected to continue instructing their *familia*, as indeed Boniface did. Lull's study of poetry would thus have helped prepare him for the promotion to which he seems to have been destined early on. Many of Lull's letters position him – and, indeed, show him positioning himself – as a literary as well as ecclesiastical heir to Boniface. In one of his earlier surviving messages, he requests from Boniface more time to continue studies in Thuringia; to this letter he appends a twenty-line poem whose profoundly Aldhelmian style seems to signal his continued loyalty to Boniface's own style and teaching.[69] In another letter, he asks a former teacher – perhaps at Malmesbury – to send him copies of Aldhelm's works,[70] while in still another, Lull writes to an unknown – but almost certainly English – nun, appending to his letter poems in hexameters and in rhythmic octosyllables.[71] These verses echo not only Aldhelm, but earlier correspondence addressed to Boniface.[72] As Boniface's student, secretary, and successor at Mainz, Lull seems to have attempted to perpetuate not only Boniface's organizational work, but the kind of literary culture that his master had fostered: a distinctively English, Aldhelmian form of Latin prose and verse that sustained the mission's sense of its own common origin.

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67 Malcolm Parkes argues that the copy of *Iohannis celsi rimans* in St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q.v.I.15, is in Boniface's own handwriting: "The Handwriting of St Boniface: A Reassessment of the Problems," in his *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London: 1991), 121–42. The poem may have been composed by Boniface, although this is difficult to ascertain. Certainly its diction contains many Aldhelmian phrases, but this is not dispositive, especially since an alternative candidate, Cellanus of Péronne, was also an Aldhelm enthusiast: see David Howlett, "A Possible Author of 'Iohannis celsi rimans misteria caeli,'" *Peritia* 21 (2011), 158–61, and (for a facsimile and transcription of the poem) A.E. Burn, *Facsimiles of the Creeds from Early Manuscripts*, Henry Bradshaw Society 36 (London: 1909), Plate XIX.

68 Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 64–65.

69 Tangl, no. 103 (which he dates ca. 739–741); for further analysis, see Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 204–05.

70 Tangl, no. 71: see further Orchard, "Old Sources, New Resources," 33–34.

71 Tangl, no. 140.

72 Orchard, *Poetic Art*, 65; Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 205.

This literary culture outlasted Boniface by a generation or two, before being overwhelmed by the massive changes that Charlemagne and his court advisers introduced to the ecclesiastical culture in the region. We can still see witnesses to its impact in certain books from the mission region, however, many of them copied years after Boniface's death. Great codices like Vienna, Nationalbibliothek lat. 751, a mid-9th century book containing the sole surviving copy of Aldhelm's *Carmen rhythmicum* as well as the most important collection of Boniface's letters, are the most obvious examples; but other manuscripts also attest to Boniface's literary impact. Among the most interesting is Rome, Vatican City, Bibliotheca apostolica Palat. lat. 1753, a book from Lorsch.[73] Copied around 800, this manuscript contains a large number of grammatical texts strongly focused on metre, including Late Antique works like Pompeius and Marius Victorinus. It also contains the entirety of Aldhelm's *De metris*, including the riddles, and the copy of *Caesurae uersuum* attributed to Boniface by name. Following this is a unique set of *enigmata* in a distinctively Aldhelmian Anglo-Latin style.[74] Sandwiched within the riddle collection is an epitaph for an otherwise unknown Domberht, an Englishman whom, we are told, Boniface "magno studio docuit, nutrivit, amavit" ("taught, fostered, and loved with great zeal").[75] Strikingly, though, this elegiac commemoration of a second-generation member of Boniface's flock is written in a more modern style, more closely resembling that of Alcuin and his colleagues in Charlemagne's court.[76] The Lorsch manuscript thus provides a kind of capsule history of Boniface's teaching. Built on a foundation of Late Antique learning and the spectacular modern Latinity of Aldhelm, the work of Boniface and his students continued the favoured forms of their predecessors. Although the Carolingians who followed abandoned the missionaries' distinctively English style, they nevertheless revered and preserved the content of Boniface's teaching.[77]

73 A facsimile is now available via the invaluable Bibliotheca Laureshamensis digital project: http://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/bav/bav_pal_lat_1753. Bischoff groups the manuscript with those in the older Lorsch style: Bernhard Bischoff, "Lorsch im Spiegel seiner Handschriften," in *Die Reichsabtei Lorsch: Festschrift zum Gedenken an ihre Stiftung 764*, ed. Friedrich Knöpp, vol. 2 (Darmstadt: 1977), 21–23.

74 Now edited with commentary in Orchard, *Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition* (forthcoming); for further analysis, see Patrizia Lendinara, "Gli *Aenigmata Laureshamensia*," *Pan* 7 (1981), 73–90; Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 206–07.

75 Dümmler, MGH PLAC I, 19–20, line 25. Orchard suggests that the position of the epitaph may perhaps have signalled authorship (*Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition*, forthcoming).

76 Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 207–08.

77 Echoes of an otherwise little-attested aspect of Boniface's interests can be found as late as 9th-century Fulda, from which a treatise *De inuentione li*[*tter*]*arum*, possibly by Hrabanus Maurus, attributes a system of cryptography to Boniface's teaching: see Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: 1946), 290–94.

CHAPTER 6

The Boniface Correspondence

Michel Aaij

1 Introduction[1]

Our knowledge of Saint Boniface is so rich because of the Boniface correspondence, a collection of one hundred and fifty documents, most of them letters exchanged between Boniface and people associated with his mission.[2] The correspondence offers an extraordinary opportunity to study the life of the man and his era. The letters, which Joseph Lortz called "an important representation of pre-Carolingian humanism,"[3] give us a glimpse into the history of Fulda and other places associated with the saint, the relations between missionaries and the papacy, and the material and social world of Boniface's contemporaries. All modern biographies lean on the correspondence as much as on the different *vitae*, and while the letters are highly conventional in form and style (although to different degrees, depending on addressee and context), they are frequently used to offer psychological, moral, and doctrinal insight into a man whose historical footprint is clearer than his inner life.

The correspondence, compiled in Mainz by Lull, Boniface's successor as archbishop, owes its survival to more than mere record keeping. Most immediate for their preservation was the local interest in the documents relevant to Mainz and Fulda. The collection was used in this way by Hrabanus Maurus in Mainz and by the 11th-century hagiographer Otloh of St Emmeram to augment what he gleaned from the *vitae*.[4] As primary (and sometimes

1 I wish to acknowledge the help of Dr. Michael Glatthaar and Dr. Shannon Godlove with the composition and editing of this chapter.

2 Other names for the collection in English include "Bonifatian correspondence." Also used sometimes is the abbreviation BLE, for *Bonifatius et Lulli Epistolae*.

3 Joseph Lortz, "Untersuchungen zur Missionsmethode und zur Frömmigkeit des heiligen Bonifatius nach seinen Briefen," in *Joseph Lortz: Erneuerung und Einheit. Aufsätze zur Theologie und Kirchengeschichte, aus Anlass seines 100. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Manns (Stuttgart: 1987), 231: "Das Bonifatianische Brief-Corpus kennzeichnet sich als wichtige Darstellung des vorkarolingischen Humanismus."

4 Michael Tangl, *Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (Berlin: 1916), vii-viii, whose introduction and comments are hereafter cited by page number as "Tangl (1916)." The letters themselves are cited following Tangl's numbering as "Tangl, no. 93," for example, throughout this volume. Tangl's earlier translation of a selection of the letters is cited as "Tangl (1912)."

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falsified) documents, the correspondence forms a record pertaining to the legal status of Fulda and the monastery's relation to the papacy and surrounding dioceses, its possessions, and the position of the abbot of Fulda. The correspondence also contains reports of decisions reached by synods that sometimes dealt with practical matters that any bishop might face in their diocese: such letters came to have the force of canon law. Finally, classical and medieval letters often come to us as collections used to supply an organization with a set of templates for letters of various kinds,[5] and there is good evidence that the Boniface correspondence includes such templates.

This chapter provides an overview of the manuscripts and the editorial history that gave us the current collection. I discuss the literary style and rhetoric of the letters, including their use of formulaic phrasing and poetic qualities. The letters aided in forming spiritual communities between people who often were very remote and in need of prayer and support. In the final sections of the chapter I discuss the frequent occurrence of prayer requests, the expressions of friendship, and the particular importance of the letters to and from women, including kinswomen, nuns, and fellow missionaries.

2 Manuscripts and Editorial History

Much 19th-century scholarship was occupied with compiling and organizing the letters; groundbreaking work was done by John Allen Giles, Philipp Hedwig Külb, Heinrich Hahn, Philipp Jaffé, August Josef Nürnberger, and Ernst Dümmler.[6] More recently the letters have been compiled and edited in the works of Austrian historian Michael Tangl, author of a monograph with a

5 Jan Gerchow, *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen: Mit einem Katalog der libri vitae und Necrologien*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung 20 (Berlin: 1988), 26.

6 John Allen Giles (ed.), *Sancti Bonifacii archiepiscopi et martyris: Opera quae extant omnia* (London: 1844); Philipp Hedwig Külb (ed.), *Sämmtliche Schriften des Hl. Bonifatius übersetzt und erläutert* (Regensburg: 1859); Heinrich Hahn, *Bonifaz und Lul* (Leipzig: 1883), and "Über einige Briefe der Bonifazischen Sammlung mit unbestimmter Adresse," *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 21 (1888), 383–400; Philipp Jaffé, *Monumenta Monguntina* (Berlin: 1866), 8–315, and "Zur Chronologie der Bonifazischen Briefe und Synoden," *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 10 (1870), 397–426; August Josef Nürnberger, "Verlorene Handschriften der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius," *Neues Archiv* 7 (1882), 335–81, "Zur Handschriftlichen Überlieferung der Werke des heiligen Bonifatius," *Neues Archiv* 8 (1883), 299–325, and "Die Bonifatiuslitteratur der Magdeburger Centuriatoren," *Neues Archiv* 11 (1886), 9–4; and Ernst Dümmler, "S. Bonifatii et Lulli Epistolae," *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi* (1), MGH (Berlin: 1892), 215–433.

selection of translations (1912), a series of articles (1916 and 1919), and the now authoritative collection for the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (1916).[7]

Of the three primary manuscripts, the oldest is the Munich Codex (Cod. lat. Monacensis 8112), dated to the late 8th century. The Karlsruhe codex (Cod. Carlsruhensis, Rastatt 22) is slightly later than the Vienna Codex (Cod. Vindobonensis 751);[8] both date from the middle of the 9th century. Tangl concluded that the Munich and Karlsruhe manuscripts are based on a lost copy of an even earlier copy, which was in turn the direct source for Vienna. In practically all modern publications, Tangl's numbering is accepted as the standard; "Tangl, no. 89" thus refers to the letter he numbered 89 in his 1916 edition. There are copies of Munich and Karlsruhe (Vienna was never copied), but these manuscripts rarely deliver more than minor textual improvements to the basic texts established by the three main codices.

The correspondence as we know it now consists of two separate collections: the *collectio pontifica* has the letters between Boniface and the various popes, while the *collectio communis* comprises the remaining letters between Boniface and other correspondents as well as some that are neither to nor from Boniface.[9] This generic differentiation is as old as the collections themselves: almost all the letters from the popes are found only in Munich and Karlsruhe, although Vienna has two letters to Pope Stephen II. Vienna essentially adds the *collectio communis* to the papal letters found in the other two collections: these are "personal and less formal"[10] letters between Boniface and fellow clergymen, kinfolk, collaborators, and various rulers. Vienna also has a set of letters (mostly involving Lull, Boniface's successor as archbishop of Mainz) that postdate Boniface's death, and a few other texts. According to Tangl, who grouped most of these together in the set numbered 110–150, they must have been copied directly from Lull's archive in Mainz given the copyist's use of various

7 Tangl's 1916/1919 article "Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe" was published in two parts in *Neues Archiv* 40 (pages 639–790); and 41 (pages 23–102), and reprinted in the 1966 collection *Das Mittelalter in Quellenkunde und Diplomatik: Ausgewählte Schriften* 1, ed. Michael Tangl, Forschungen zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 12 (Graz: 1966).

8 Tangl also refers to codices by number: Munich is Codex 1, Karlsruhe is Codex 2, and Vienna is Codex 3.

9 Jaffé, who had recognized this division, called them "collectio minor" and "collectio maior," respectively; see Philipp Jaffé, *Monumenta Monguntina* (Berlin: 1866), 8–9. In addition, the Vienna Codex contains a set of Aldhelmian poems and two miscellaneous letters, numbered 1–6 by Tangl, which are rarely reprinted. Tangl also, without much commentary, adds a "collectio Lulli" and a "epistolae extravagantes" to the "communis" selection: Tangl (1916), xvi.

10 Andy Orchard, "Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface," *ASE* 30 (2001), 17.

typographical symbols and ornamental touches that must have come from original letters (more on this below).[11] These three manuscripts are the basis for what we now call the Boniface correspondence, though one letter (Tangl, no. 20) is found in none of them; its authenticity is questioned.[12]

2.1 *The Munich Codex*

The oldest of the manuscripts is the Munich Codex. Its first modern editor, Mainz historian Stephan Alexander Würdtwein dated it to the 9th century; later Philipp Jaffé dated it to the 10th. Tangl concluded, on basis of the handwriting (Carolingian minuscule with some characteristics of the earlier uncial), that early 9th century is the latest possible date. Originally written in Mainz (almost entirely in a single hand), the manuscript must have been moved to Fulda soon, where it (or a manuscript very much like it) was used by Hrabanus Maurus in the 9th century and by Otloh in the mid-11th century. Shortly afterward it was donated, with other Fulda manuscripts, to the recently founded St Martin's Abbey in Mainz, where Philipp Gercken (1786) and Würdtwein (1789) consulted it; later, it went to Munich via Aschaffenburg.[13] A copy of the manuscript was made after Otloh consulted it, according to Tangl. This copy, originally in Ingolstadt and now Munich Lat. 830, was used by Nicolaus Serarius in his edition of the correspondence.[14] The Munich Codex is missing one important leaf, the page between what is now folios 54 and 55 (the numbering is from the 19th century) which contained the better part of a letter by Pope Zachary (Tangl, no. 89).[15] Tangl argues that Otloh removed the original page; Stengel maintains that Rudolf of Fulda, a known falsifier of documents who worked under Hrabanus Maurus in the early 800s, was responsible, a matter discussed more fully below.[16]

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11 Michael Tangl, "Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe (I. Teil)," in *Neues Archiv 40* (1916), 651–52; Franz Unterkircher (ed.), *Sancti Bonifacii epistolae: Codex Vindobonensis 751 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek* (Graz: 1971), 23–24.

12 The letter is preserved in Otloh's *vita*; Tangl already questioned it, and Reinhold Rau suggests it might have been written by Otloh himself. Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius: nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 4b (Darmstadt: 1968), 72.

13 Tangl (1916), vi–viii.

14 Tangl (1916), viii; Serarius Nicolaus (ed.), *Epistolae S. Bonifacii Martyris, Primi Moguntini Archiepiscopi, Germanorum Apostoli* (Mainz, Paris: 1605).

15 Michael Tangl, "Die Fuldaer Privilegienfrage," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 20 (1899), 207ff.; Edmund Ernst Stengel, "Fuldensia I: Die Urkundenfälschungen des Rudolf von Fulda," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 5 (1914), 86–102.

16 The manuscript is available online from the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek: https://opacplus.bsb-muenchen.de/metaopac/singleHit.do?methodToCall=showHit&curPos=2&identifier=100_SOLR_SERVER_2010484275.

According to Tangl, the preponderance of letters from the popes and relative paucity of letters by Boniface to the popes revealed how the correspondence had been organized – Boniface, he argues, admired the Gregorian register of letters[17] and so kept copies of his own letters when he travelled, while letters sent to him were kept in an archive, probably in Mainz. Thus, the Munich Codex consists mostly of papal letters to Boniface since the letters written by Boniface would have been lost at the martyrdom. Reinhold Rau finds this somewhat fanciful explanation unlikely; if Boniface had overseen his own archive, he wouldn't have introduced the kinds of errors seen in the Munich Codex, such as confusing letters by the two popes named Gregory, by interleaving documents by Gregory III among letters by Gregory II, for instance.[18] The letters actually do tell us that Boniface was very interested in what archives could do; in 735, for example he has a letter delivered (Tangl, no. 34) by his priest Eoban to a former pupil who was possibly connected to the Roman papal archives,[19] asking him to provide him with books and to look up what he could find in the Roman archives about a particular type of marriage relationship. It is a pity we do not have Boniface's own instructions concerning his letters.

2.2 *The Karlsruhe Codex*

The Karlsruhe Codex dates from the mid-9th century and contains four different hands; Tangl notes that one of the scribes wrote the outer leaves of the sixth quire, fols. 33 and 40. These pages are more heavily ruled than the others, and fol. 40 contains the forged version of the "Zachary letter" (Tangl no. 89): the original letter is replaced with one containing the famous exemption granted to Fulda by Pope Zachary.[20] Though the exact nature of this exemption is disputed, it has been taken to mean that it removed Fulda from the authority of the bishop (whether of Mainz or of Würzburg) and made it subject directly to the papal see, a privilege which has long been proven to be based on a forgery.[21] The manuscript lacks a number of pages in the beginning, the close

17 Tangl, "Studien," 88. On the Vatican and its "command of data," see John Moorhead, *The Popes and the Church of Rome in Late Antiquity* (Abingdon: 2014), 255–58.

18 See Rau, *Briefe*, 10–11. Tangl, nos. 17–20 are letters by Gregory II; no. 18, for instance, is the letter that elevates Boniface to bishop, and Tangl, no. 20 commends him to Charles Martel. Both are dated to 722. Tangl, no. 21, however, is the letter by Gregory III supporting the Saxon mission, and is dated 738–39. Tangl, nos. 22–26 are again letters from the early 720s, including a number from Gregory II; Tangl, no. 28 is again a letter by Gregory III. That the authenticity of Tangl, no. 20 is questioned does not affect the basic argument (Rau, *Briefe*, 72).

19 *Letters*, trans. Emerton, 41.

20 Tangl, "Fuldaer Privilegienfrage"; Tangl (1916), 203; Stengel, "Fuldensia I," 86–102.

21 Whether Fulda at the time was part of the Mainz or the Würzburg diocese is not entirely clear, though consensus appears to have settled on Würzburg. On the exemption, see

of one letter, and possibly one letter completely. An 11th-century corrector smoothed out the Latin, in some cases improving it, but in many cases adding errors and changing content: Tangl identifies this corrector as Otloh.[22]

2.3 *The Vienna Codex*

The Vienna Codex's compiler had direct access to the archive in Mainz, and for this reason the codex has some remarkable features. The correspondence takes up folios 1–77, in a single 9th-century hand writing in Carolingian miniscule, except for folios 76–77, which are by a different but contemporary scribe.[23] The scribe copied a number of symbols and elements from those originals, including crosses and a Chi-Ro, and whimsical items such as a drawing of the strings and holes used to close a letter, which concludes a letter to Lull (fol. 63r, Tangl no. 124).[24] There are two more major oddities. One is a set of poems by Æthilwald in the style of Aldhelm (fols. 40r-42r)[25] that forms the division between a set of letters mostly involving Boniface and the set of letters mostly pertaining to Lull. The other, on 39v, is a palindrome, METROHOCANGISSITISSIGNACOHORTEM – a puzzle that is not yet solved.[26] Perhaps this was an inside joke: evidently Boniface and his colleagues had devised a kind of secret language[27] which one finds employed five times in the Vienna Codex: two instances occur in a letter also found in the Munich and Karlsruhe Codices, but without the secret coding; two others are transmitted in their coded versions with a transcription, which enable the code to be cracked. The code involves the rewriting of letters based on the same letter in different alphabets, including

Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Neue Hinweise zum Rechtsstatus des Klosters Fulda aus der *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 41 (1991), 11–29.

22 Tangl (1916), viii-x; for the identification as Otloh, see xxix and xl. The manuscript is available online from the Badische Landesbibliothek, https://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/blbhs/Handschriften/content/titleinfo/303411.

23 Unterkircher, *Codex Vindobonensis*, 17.

24 Unterkircher, *Codex Vindobonensis*, 25–26.

25 Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: 1995), 21–23; Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: 2014), 136.

26 Unterkircher, *Codex Vindobonensis*, 29. This is a letter by a young Lull, to an unnamed abbess and nun in England, containing a sampling of his poetry. The Aldhelmian prose of the letter derives from *De virginitate* and was learned from Boniface during his stay in Rome in 738. It contains, besides the cryptic palindrome, an attempt at Aldhelmian acrostic with some words in Greek; a runic alphabet (written out as words); and a set of six acronyms (all consisting of three identical consonants) and their explications. See the extensive notes in Tangl (1916), 218–22. The playful nature of these exercises, if that is what they are, has been recognized, though their meaning is still obscure; see Wildman, *Life of S. Ealdhelm*, 117–18.

27 Tangl, "Studien," 129.

the Greek and runic alphabets. In one case, letters were replaced by the letters that followed it in the alphabet.[28] The Vienna manuscript spent much of its life in Cologne and seems not to have been copied or studied until it was used for the *Magdeburg Centuries*, the church history produced by Lutherans in Magdeburg between 1559 and 1574.[29]

2.4 *Additional Codices and* Acta deperdita

Additional manuscripts fall into three groups. The basis for what Tangl and Rau designate group 5 is a copy of the Karlsruhe Codex which was sent by Abbot Egbert of Fulda to Rome for Pope Leo IX, who had wanted to revise the *vita* but died before he could.[30] Otloh got access to the copy in Regensburg, and finished his *vita* in Fulda between 1062 and 1066, using the correspondence and a copy of Willibald's *vita*. The 29 letters he copied into the *Vita Bonifatii auctore Otloh* make up category 5.[31]

Groups 4 and 6 are closely related: group 4 is a selection of 28 letters, and group 6 a collection of letters excluded from group 4's selection. While Tangl considered them related to Otloh, Rau disagrees and argues that group 4 dates from 250 years before Otloh; both groups 4 and 6, he says, ultimately derive from Mainz, not Fulda. Copies of the now-lost archetype of group 4 are found in the Vatican, in Venice, in Montpellier, and in Reims, dating from the 12th through to the 15th centuries.[32] Of group 6, three copies remain, all from the 16th century, and they derive from a now-lost original which had been brought from Mainz to Rome in the 15th century.[33]

In his 1916/1917 "Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe," Tangl compiled a list of 90 letters in six different categories which were probably lost (*acta deperdita*). His list is extrapolated from the existing letters, many of which make overt references to previous correspondence, and includes 31 letters by Boniface and 17 by the popes.[34]

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28 Unterkircher, *Codex Vindobonensis*, 27–28.

29 A facsimile of the manuscript is available, edited by Franz Unterkircher, *Sancti Bonifacii epistolae: Codex Vindobonensis 751*.

30 Tangl numbers them 4, 5, and 6, to follow Codex 1, 2, and 3.

31 Rau, *Briefe*, 15.

32 Rau, *Briefe*, 16–20.

33 August Josef Nürnberger, "Verlorene Handschriften der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius," *Neues Archiv* 7 (1882), 58–61; Tangl (1916), xxvi; Rau, *Briefe*, 20.

34 Tangl, "Studien," 195–216. In his 2004 book *Mit Axt und Evangelium*, Hubertus Lutterbach fills in many of these blanks, composing a "biography in letters" by means of creative writing.

3 Modern History

The modern history of the collection begins in Basel in 1564, when the letters were edited and published by Lutheran reformer Flacius Illyricus.[35] Subsequent editions were published by the Jesuit Nicolaus Serarius (1605) and Mainz historian Stephan Würdtwein (1789). The publication in the Patrologia Latina series (1863) derives from the work of Serarius and Würdtwein, as well as that of J.A. Giles (1844). Three editions in the MGH follow, by Jaffé (1866), Dümmler (1892), and finally Michael Tangl, whose 1916 edition is now authoritative. The most important publication since Tangl is probably Reinhold Rau's *Briefe des Bonifatius* (1968), which contains a selection of the correspondence (in Latin and German), besides other source material including Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*.[36] Tangl's reordering of the material (especially that from the Vienna Codex), necessitated by his aim to turn three manuscripts into one coherent and chronological volume, has been criticized. Christine Fell even calls Tangl's ordering of the letters "misleading."[37] Additionally, the letters found in the Vienna Codex, many of which are not by Boniface or addressed to him, were given short shrift until recently. Orchard says "the term 'Bonifatian correspondence' is itself something of a misnomer" since so much of it does not directly relate to Boniface,[38] and Fell notes that anthologists and translators have typically neglected the first eight letters (including the Aldhelm set) and the last forty or so letters (the Lull set), nearly all of which derive from the Vienna Codex.[39] This neglect, however, is a 20th-century feature: Heinrich Hahn's 1883 study *Bonifaz und Lul* spends equal time on the sets pertaining to Aldhelm, to Boniface, and to Lull,[40] but since then the focus certainly has been on Boniface.

35 Tangl pays only brief homage to Flacius Illyricus and his fellow writers of the *Magdeburg Centuries*. For more detail, see August Josef Nürnberger, "Die Bonifatiuslitteratur der Magdeburger Centuriatoren," *Neues Archiv* 11 (1886), 9–41.

36 Many other books contain selections of the correspondence – Wiss's 1842 book on Boniface has 38 of the letters based on Würdtwein; Külb's 1859 book translates the correspondence and attempts to find agreement between Würdtwein, Serarius, and Giles; Tangl's 1912 *Die Briefe des hl. Bonifatius* translates a selection.

37 Christine Fell, "Some Implications of the Boniface Correspondence," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, eds. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington and Indianapolis: 1990), 30.

38 Orchard, "Old Sources," 16.

39 Fell, "Some Implications," 30–31.

40 Heinrich Hahn, *Bonifaz und Lul* (Leipzig: 1883). One of the reasons for his book, he says, was a desire to write a biography of Lull (Hahn, *Bonifaz und Lul*, v); in the end, the book is really a collection of three partial biographies mostly based on the correspondence. Whatever the genesis of the book, its divisions are quite equitable: 50 pages on Aldhelm

More recent investigations of style, of rhetoric, of the social networks of these correspondents are recuperating that part of the correspondence.

No complete translation of the correspondence exists in English; all are selections, and all but one are based on Tangl. The standard English translation is by Ephraim Emerton (1940); it was revised and updated by Thomas F.X. Noble (2000).[41] Also of note are the selections by Edward Kylie (London: 1911, based on Dümmler), and those in the anthology by C.H. Talbot (New York: 1954).[42] It is high time for a new and complete translation of the letters into English or German.

4 Forgeries and Misrepresentations

Forgeries and misrepresentations in the correspondence, by Boniface himself and by others, have had serious consequences particularly for the history of Fulda Abbey but also for Utrecht. The *Cartula sancti Bonifatii*, the foundational document that grants Boniface the land for the abbey, was forged by Rudolf of Fulda (d. 865).[43] For years Rudolf supervised the Fulda *scriptorium*, including under Hrabanus Maurus.[44]

An early misrepresentation comes from Boniface himself, who had greatly exaggerated the "desert" out of which Fulda was founded: in his letter to Pope Zachary (Tangl, no. 86) he spoke of a "locus silvaticus in heremo vastissimae solitudinisi," a "wooded place in the midst of a vast wilderness." Even if Fulda was not built on the remains of a Merovingian palace, as some early archeologists have suggested,[45] it certainly was established where a number of important roads crossed, and one of its functions, to support the Franks and help

(Tangl, nos. 1–8), 185 pages on Boniface (Tangl, nos. 9–112), 100 pages on Lull (Tangl, nos. 113–50).

41 All translations from the letters are cited from Thomas F.X. Noble's updated edition of Emerton, by page number, except where indicated. Emerton's accompanied his own numbering with Tangl's, but few if any scholars use Emerton's numbering.

42 Kylie's *The English Correspondence of St. Boniface* was reprinted in London, 1924, and in New York, 1966. Talbot's *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (New York: 1954) contains a selection of the letters and a translation of the Willibald *vita*, and other hagiographies.

43 Stengel, "Fuldensia 1," 54–55.

44 Rudolf likely compiled the (now-lost) Hrabanus correspondence. Stengel, "Fuldensia 1," 44.

45 Franz Staab, "Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der Fränkischen und Päpstlichen Politik," *Archiv für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 40 (1980), 13–41.

ensure the loyalty of the local Hessian nobles, means it cannot have been in the middle of nowhere: exaggeration and scripture-inspired topological overdetermination are certainly at play.[46]

Another important forgery is the letter by Pope Zachary (Tangl, no. 89), entered in the Karlsruhe Codex most likely by the same Rudolf. He had an entire quire lifted out of the codex; the text on the outside leaves, folios 33 and 40, was erased and rewritten. Folio 40 contains the forged letter. The Vienna Codex, which also contained the letter, was given no such careful treatment: it was butchered by either Rudolf (according to Stengel and Rau) or Otloh (according to Tangl), who cut out the page containing the bulk of Zachary's letter.[47] Stengel argues that Rudolf forged the letter most likely in 822–823, during Hrabanus's first year as abbot. By the end of 823 a copy of the forged document had reached Rome, where Pope Paschal I, enraged by this forgery, threatened Hrabanus with excommunication – but the pope died in 824, and the matter seems to have been dropped.[48] Thus Fulda acquired its exemption from the Mainz and/or Würzburg dioceses in perpetuity, or at least until 1752, when Fulda became a diocese – an event that Edmund Stengel described as the final consequence of the forgery leading to yet another period of growth for the Fulda abbey.[49]

A similar forgery was less successful: Tangl no. 88 was ostensibly written in 751 by Pope Zachary and confirms Mainz as an archdiocese. Its authenticity was already doubted by Hauck; these doubts were confirmed by Tangl. Whoever forged it (possibly Lull) seems to have wanted to right a perceived wrong: in 745 Zachary appointed Boniface to the newly elevated archdiocese of Cologne (Tangl, no. 60), but the Frankish nobility apparently protested and Boniface had to be satisfied with Mainz. Lull's forgery basically replaces "Cologne" with "Mainz" and changes the date of the papal decree that raised Cologne to an archdiocese. This would have raised Mainz to the level of metropolitan archdiocese, on a par with Cologne, and would justify Lull becoming a metropolitan bishop.[50] The exact chronology of Mainz is still a matter of some

46 Theo Kölzer, "Bonifatius und Fulda: Rechtliche, diplomatische und kulturelle Aspekte," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 27 (2005), 28–29.

47 Stengel, "Fuldensia I," 86–102; Rau, *Briefe*, 14–15; Tangl (1916), 203. Moorhead, in his 2014 study of the papacy in Late Antiquity, seems to have missed the forgery; Moorhead, *The Popes*, 227.

48 Stengel, "Fuldensia I," 92–96.

49 Stengel, "Fuldensia I," 31. More extensive, recent discussion about the term "exemption" and its applicability for Fulda is found in Kölzer, "Bonifatius und Fulda," 34–45, and in Lotte Kéry, "Klosterexemption in der Einöde?: Bonifatius und das Privileg des Zachary für Fulda (751)," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 60 (2008), 75–110.

50 Tangl (1916), 201; Theodor Schieffer, *Angelsachsen und Franken*, Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 20 (Wiesbaden: 1951), 1487–489. See Tangl's analysis of the comparison between

contention, but it became a metropolitan archdiocese in 780–782.[51] Steffen Patzold argues that the insecurity of the position and extent of Mainz under Lull was the reason for the falsification, which he called "clumsy." According to Patzold, the purpose of the forgery was unclear as well: was it intended to establish that Mainz was granted metropolitan status or to set out its boundaries more precisely?[52]

What is at a minimum a bending of the truth occurs in a late letter by Boniface to Pope Stephen II (Tangl no. 109). Writing in 753, possibly as preparations for his final journey are underway, Boniface argues that the mission in Utrecht properly belongs to him (as archbishop in Mainz) and not to the diocese of Cologne, as was claimed by its bishop, Hildegar, who had complained to the pope after Boniface appointed two successive bishops in Utrecht.[53] Boniface says that when Willibrord arrived in Utrecht with the blessing of Pope Sergius I to work among the Frisians, he found the remains of a small church, "destroyed by the heathen."[54] There Willibrord built his see (and the church of St Salvator). But as Boniface was eyeing Utrecht again, perhaps as a coda for his life's work, there was a competing claim from the bishop of Cologne, who – Boniface said – laid claim to Utrecht, arguing that a century earlier the Merovingian king Dagobert had promised Utrecht and its church to Cologne on the condition that Cologne convert the people in the area. According to Boniface, the area had obviously not been converted before Willibrord, so Cologne had no rights to it. Boniface conveniently omits that no mission efforts from Cologne or anywhere else could have been possible while the Frisians ruled the area. In addition, his letter has Willibrord appointed as Bishop of Utrecht by Pope Sergius, though in those days such dioceses were usually established by the Frankish overlords, and he argues that he is Willibrord's successor by order of Carloman.[55]

This view of the history of Utrecht may not have convinced Rome – after Boniface, there is no bishop in Utrecht, only an abbot; the diocese, if there was

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the phrasing of letters n. 60 and 88 in "Studien zur Neuasgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe I," 785–88.

51 Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1887), 516; Tangl (1912), 198.

52 Steffen Patzold, "Eine Hierarchie im Wandel: Die Ausbildung einer Metropolitanordnung im Frankenreich des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts," *Hiérarchie et stratification sociale dans l'occident médiéval (400–1100)*, eds. François Bougard, Dominique Iogna-Prat, and Régine LeJan (Turnhout: 2008), 175–77.

53 Eric Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert, and the Forged Foundations of Hamburg-Bremen* (Farnham: 2011), 31.

54 Emerton, 60.

55 Marco Mostert, "Bonifatius als Geschiedvervalser," *Madoc: Tijdschrift voor Mediëvistiek* 9 (1995), 213–21.

one, was scrapped and the monastery came under control of Cologne. But Boniface's letter, as Marco Mostert argues, is foundational for Utrecht historians who list Willibrord as the first bishop, establishing an unbroken line of succession all the way through Gregory and Liudger and raising the early status of Utrecht, which was really more of a backwater until the 9th century.[56]

Another forged letter, ascribed to a Pope Gregory, possibly Gregory III, is retained only in the *Vita Waltgeri* and discusses the two "heretics" Boniface dealt with repeatedly, the Gaul Aldebert and the Irishman Clemens.[57] Franz Flaskamp considered it a forgery based on historical, geographical, and other reasons,[58] and it adds nothing to our understanding of Boniface. However, our knowledge of the two supposed heretics is based almost completely on this letter and on synodal documents; Willbald's *vita* mentions them but only in a single sentence of generalities.[59] This is yet more proof of the importance of the letters: according to Jeffrey Russell, "Boniface's correspondence is our largest source for the history of heresy in the period."[60]

5 Style and Rhetoric

The correspondence, especially the Vienna Codex, owes its very compilation and preservation to rhetorical considerations, as it was partially intended for use as a manual for letter writing. Sixteen of the letters in the Vienna Codex have no name for a sender, or indicate the name for the sender by ".N." for *nomen*, "name." Likewise, in thirteen letters in the Vienna Codex the recipient is unnamed or marked "N." This shows that the letters are to be seen as models.[61] As Andy Orchard explains, the heartfelt note by Bugga (Tangl, no. 15), who asks

56 Mostert, "Bonifatius als Geschiedvervalser," 220.

57 Sven Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy of Clemens," *Church History* 80.2 (2011), 253.

58 Franz Flaskamp, "Der Bonifatiusbrief von Herford: Ein angebliches Zeugnis zur Sachsenmission," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 44 (1964), 319–21.

59 For more information and bibliography, see von Padberg (2005), 89–90. Meeder's article on the case contains an extensive discussion of the sources; Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy," 53–65.

60 Jeffrey B. Russell, "Saint Boniface and the Eccentrics," *Church History* 33 (1964), 243–44, says that that this one episode proves that "the amount of heresy in the eighth century was considerable."

61 In an early analysis of style, Heinrich Hahn noted the "formelhaftes Aussehn" (formulaic appearance) of the anonymous letters, but was more concerned with identifying the senders and recipients of the original letters than with understanding the purpose and audience of the collection; Heinrich Hahn, "Über einige Briefe der Bonifazischen Sammlung mit unbestimmter Adresse," *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 21 (1881), 383.

Boniface to offer masses for a deceased relative named "N," is not the result of her forgetfulness but rather evidence of the template-like quality of the letter. Nor is there much historical reason for the inclusion of a brief note by a Frankish abbess, who writes Boniface a general letter of friendship accompanying some gifts (Tangl, no. 97). Orchard's analysis of the rhetorical functions and formulas in the letters leads him to posit that the primary use of the collection was "to offer a kind of epistolary patternbook"; he lists over a dozen topics for which the letters offer a model.[62]

Certainly, the longer letters follow traditional models. An opening *salutatio* frequently involves the Gregorian phrase *servus servorum Dei*, "servant of the servants of God" (in Tangl, no. 12, the first example, Gregory II uses it).[63] This can be followed by an *exordium*, an introduction to the message itself, and then *narratio*, the letter's message, which in turn is sometimes divided into different parts. Dorothy Patricia Wallace finds Tangl no. 14, a letter by Eangyth and her daughter Bugga to Boniface, to be exemplary of this organization.[64]

Orchard points out that the themes of exile and loneliness dominate the Vienna Codex, and there are important takeaways from his discussion. First, his analysis concurs with recent developments in corpus research that indicate that the formulaic style of Old English poetry does not simply result from supposed oral composition, but is "found widely" in both Latin and Old English.[65] Second, scripture is quoted frequently for rhetorical purposes: Boniface, in a letter requesting books by Bede (Tangl, no. 76), cites it to demonstrate mastery, as if he is competing with Bede by proxy.[66] Thematically, Orchard notes that Boniface frequently cited Psalms and the letters of Paul in carefully differentiated circumstances to highlight "his thoughts of exile" (citing Psalms) and "his request for support in his evangelizing mission" (citing Paul).[67] Moreover, he identifies a private language consisting of "private topics, themes and in-jokes" between correspondents, especially in the letters by Boniface to the Abbess Eadburg.[68] On a larger scale, he says, citations and shared formulas suggest the existence of a textual community whose members, all having read from the same set of books, cited those books, and then each others' citations of those

62 Orchard, "Old Sources," 18–19.
63 Orchard, "Old Sources," 25–26.
64 Dorothy Patricia Wallace, "Feminine Rhetoric and the Epistolary Tradition: The Boniface Correspondence," *Women's Studies* 24 (1995), 233–34.
65 Orchard, "Old Sources," 19.
66 Orchard, "Old Sources," 35.
67 Orchard, "Old Sources," 21–22.
68 Orchard, "Old Sources," 23.

books;[69] Emily Thornbury calls the language of this community an "exaggerated Anglo-Latinity."[70] Thus, Leoba (Tangl no. 29) borrows from Aldhelm (the literary and stylistic father of all the correspondents, according to Hahn)[71] and from Boniface, and Lull borrows from Leoba and from other letters (Tangl, nos. 49, 71). It was precisely in such a community that one could hope to find the kind of secret language employed in the Vienna Codex.[72]

That the general style of many of the letters is Aldhelmian is practically a platitude but requires some modification. Using letters to his correspondents in England, Michael Herren argues that Boniface is less Aldhelmian than one may think. Although Boniface frequently borrowed phrases from Aldhelm, he was much less likely to use abstruse or unusual word choice; less likely to use alliteration but more likely to use chiasmus; much less likely to use hyperbaton, let alone double hyperbaton.[73] The one letter in the Boniface corpus that matches the "sheer exuberance" of some of Aldhelm's letters is the early letter to Nithard (Tangl no. 9), where Boniface is perhaps eager to display his skills to a student using a multitude of Aldhelmian inflections and word choice. Herren concludes that with higher-placed addressees, Boniface used a more straightforward style, and the older he got, the less Aldhelmian his style became. He notes also that in letters to popes and other powerful people on the Continent, Boniface "employ[ed] a rather neutral formulaic style" as opposed to the "more florid native style" used for his English correspondents.[74]

Other recent scholarship has crossed traditional divisions such as those between Latin and the Old English vernacular. Scholars including Watt, Fell, Cünnen, and Orchard have fruitfully compared some of the letters in the correspondence to Old English elegies, breaking down the barriers between poetry and prose. In his *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (1984), Peter Dronke provides a close reading of the Latin in the three letters by Berhtgyth (Tangl,

69 Orchard, "Old Sources," 20. Other scholars have drawn similar conclusions: Janina Cünnen, who took the theme of *fraternitas absentium* as central in her investigation, argues that the shared rhetoric is indicative of the creation of a fictional world shared between correspondents, a world built on shared memories and future projection in which they could imagine a physical closeness; Janina Cünnen, *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten: Angelsächsische Frauenbriefe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: 2000), 253–70.

70 Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 204.

71 Hahn, "Über einige Briefe," 383.

72 Unterkircher, *Codex Vindobonensis*, 29.

73 Michael W. Herren, "Boniface's Epistolary Prose Style: The Letters to the English," in *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, eds. Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury (Toronto: 2016), 21–25.

74 Herren, "Boniface's Epistolary Style," 21.

nos. 143, 147, 148, all found exclusively in the Vienna Codex); the last two letters contain poetic verse. While the first of these three is printed as prose by Tangl and runs as prose in the manuscript, Dronke has no qualms about translating the end of that letter as poetry, comparing its "o frater, o frater mi" to the first line of "Wulf and Eadwacer": "Wulf, min wulf."[75] As will be discussed below, literary studies such as these have also tended to pay closer attention to the letters sometimes deemed ancillary to the matter of Boniface and his mission.

6 The Images of Boniface Derived from the Correspondence

The image of Boniface presented in biographical studies varies depending upon which letters are selected and discussed by the author.[76] English biographers are generally positive in their assessments; the Reverend Gregory Smith, in an 1896 biography, attains his favorable portrayal of the saint by reprinting parts of (only) five letters: three of them are touching and supportive, and only two present the firebrand Boniface.[77] George Greenaway, in 1980, discusses only letters asking for books and support, letters that express "human interest" and the "charming and intimate" exchanges with women correspondents. He excludes the letters to and from the papacy, which can present a Boniface obsessed with detail more than with pastoral care.[78]

Those papal letters are typically cited by his more critical Dutch biographers. Mostert calls Boniface "rigid, formalistic," and to Paul Noomen Boniface appears "ambitious beyond measure and extraordinarily acerbic." Jauke Jelsma, a Protestant minister who only grudgingly approves of Boniface's zeal,

75 Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua to Marguerite Porete* (Cambridge: 1984), 30–31. According to Diane Watt, "Dronke, in choosing to translate this passage as poetry, betrays that he has been touched, perhaps overwhelmed, by Berhtgyth's Latin prose and that it has for him a particular, queer immediacy. In changing the form of the work in front of him, without acknowledging that he has done so, and thus in a sense compromising his own position of scholarly detachment, he merges Berhtgyth's voice with his own": Diane Watt, "A Fragmentary Archive: Migratory Feelings in Early Anglo-Saxon Women's Letters," *Journal of Homosexuality* 64.3 (2017), 427.

76 The most extensive biographical reading of the correspondence is Lutz E. von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius im Spiegel seines Umgangs mit Freunden und Feinden," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 71–94.

77 Two are letters of support and comfort to women, Eadburga (Tangl, no. 65) and Bugga (Tangl, no. 94), and one to a former pupil, Duddo (Tangl, no. 34); the two critical letters are the admonishments to Zachary (Tangl, no. 50) and to Æthelbald (Tangl, no. 73). See Isaac Gregory Smith, *Boniface* (London and New York: 1896), 81–98.

78 George Greenaway, "Saint Boniface as a Man of Letters," *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St. Boniface and the Church of Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 39, 41, 42.

refers to Boniface as a "terrier" in his biography of the saint.[79] German biographers generally offer more positive views. Representative is Joseph Lortz who sees in the letters evidence of the saint's humility, his awareness of his sinful state, and a complete renunciation of self in the service of the church and his mission.[80]

The richness of the letters certainly offers support for various interpretations. Courage is apparent in the famous letter to Æthelbald (Tangl, no. 73), a letter referred to by German scholars as "Mahnschreiben" (letter of warning)[81] or even "Scheltbrief" (letter of insult).[82] Boniface pulls no punches in this lengthy letter that both praises and chastizes. It is possible that Boniface could be this critical because he was safely on the Continent, far removed from the king. This rather unique letter is also preserved outside the original letter collections.[83]

Affection can be masked by the demands of high style in epistolary rhetoric, but it is visible nonetheless: "Since we have so long been separated, beloved sister, through the fear of Christ and my love of wandering, by a wide space of land and sea, I have learned from many reports of the storms of troubles which with God's permission have befallen you in your old age," he writes to his kinswoman Bugga (Tangl, no. 94). Such personal notes are the things that color biographies.

Willibald tells us very little about Boniface's childhood and education; while the young boy's desire to enter monastic life and the father's sickness make up the bulk of Chapter 1 of his *vita*, this account – which has aspects of a miracle story and is certainly very conventional – does not tell us what young Wynfrith hoped to learn or to achieve. Lutz E. von Padberg gleans this, however, from Wynfrith's letter to his friend Nithard, dated 716–717, and thus predating his

79 These qualifications translated from Rob Meens, "Het Christendom van Willibrord en Bonifatius," *Trajecta* 15 (2006), 351, who notes that these judgments were made "particularly on the basis of his letters."

80 Joseph Lortz, "Untersuchungen zur Missionsmethode und zur Frömmigkeit des hl. Bonifatius," in Joseph Lortz, *Erneuerung und Einheit: Aufsätze zur Theologie und Kirchengeschichte, aus Anlass seines 100. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Manns (Stuttgart: 1987), 255.

81 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995), 77; Gerald Krutzler, *Kult und Tabu: Wahrnehmungen der Germania bei Bonifatius* (Berlin: 2011), 15–16.

82 Tangl, "Studien," 714.

83 For more on this letter, see Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume. The letter is preserved, for instance, in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, who quotes it in full (in the Stubbs edition, see xxviii and 79–82). On the importance of that letter for an assessment of how churchmen and worldly rulers communicated, see Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages* (Hambledon and London: 2003), 27.

move to the Continent (Tangl, no. 9).[84] This is an emotional injunction by an already-middle-aged man to a younger man, urging him to not waste his talents. Von Padberg suggests that one later letter, written in 747 to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury (Tangl, no. 78), summarizes much of Boniface's life and goals. In that letter Boniface describes himself as like "a barking dog that sees thieves and robbers break in and plunder his master's house, but, because he has none to help him in his defense, can only whine and complain."[85] This sounds despondent, and von Padberg argues at length that the later letters demonstrate that much of Boniface's mission had not been successful. Still, in what is perhaps the only use of an extended figure in the correspondence, Boniface returns to the simile of the dog at the end of the letter but in a much more optimistic tone, saying he does not want to be a dumb, quiet dog, but rather one who guards Christ's herd.[86]

Often, he mentions his advanced age, particularly in relation to eyesight. In a letter to Daniel, the Bishop of Worcester, written in the 740s (Tangl, no. 63), he tells of the problems in his conversion efforts and cites heavily from the Parable of the Wheat (Matthew 13:24–30). After asking for advice and prayer, he requests a favor from Daniel:

> May I be so bold, to ask of your fatherly kindness, namely, that you send me the book of the Prophets which Abbot Winbert of reverend memory, my former teacher, left when he passed from this life to the Lord, and in which the six Prophets are contained in one volume in clear letters written in full … I cannot procure in this country such a book of the Prophets as I need, and with my fading sight I cannot read well writing which is small and filled with abbreviations. I am asking for this book because it is copied clearly, with all letters distinctly written out.[87]

84 von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 74–76.

85 Emerton, 116–17; Tangl, no. 78: "Sed, pro dolor, officium laboris mei rerum conlatione simillimum esse videtur cani latranti et videnti fures et latrones frangere et subfodere et vastare domum domini sui; et quia defensionis auxiliatores non habeat, submurmurans ingemescat et lugeat."

86 von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 75.

87 Emerton, 94; Tangl, no. 63: "Preterea paternitatis vestrae clementiam de uno solacio peregrinationis meę intimis precibus diligenter rogare velim, si presumam, id est, ut librum prophetarum, quem venerande memoriae Uuinbertus abbas et magister quondam meus de hac vita ad Dominum migrans dereliquit, ubi sex prophete in uno corpore claris et absolutis litteris scripti repperientur, mihi transmittati … quia librum prophetarum talem in hac terra, qualem desidero, adquirere non possum et caligantibus oculis minutas litteras ac connexas clare discere non possum. Et propterea de illo libro supradicto rogo, qui tam clare discretis et absolutis litteris scriptus est."

The appeal for a book in large writing to accommodate old eyes is touching, but also hints at shared misfortune: Boniface says he heard that Daniel, also in advanced age, has become blind. He attempts to cheer him up with reference to scripture and to Thomas the Apostle, and concludes by saying, "I believe, trusting in your wisdom and patience, that God has sent this trial for the perfecting of your strength and the increase of your merit and that by means of it you may see more clearly with the eyes of the spirit and may desire all the more the things which God loves and requires and may so much the less see and desire what God loves not but forbids."[88] In formal, balanced phrases he offers his absent friend comfort in probably the only way he can. A final reference to old age occurs in what is likely one of the last letters he wrote himself, a 753 letter to Pippin (Tangl, no. 107). Boniface says: "you have deigned to listen to our petition and so bring comfort to my frail old age"[89] – a formal turn of phrase that acquires some poignancy from the fact that a year later he was martyred.

Theodor Schieffer's still authoritative biography from 1954 reiterates the point that the most important source, by far, for Boniface's history is the correspondence,[90] and in his footnotes he refers to almost every single one of the letters up to Tangl 109 (the *collectio Lulli* starts with 112). A contemporary of Schieffer, Göttingen historian Percy Ernst Schramm, concluded that Boniface was both rational and exaggeratedly scrupulous, and compared him to Charlemagne in his lack of interest in allegorizing scripture, his building of prayer networks, and his sober rule-based rationality.[91] Von Padberg judges Boniface's personality "as mirrored in his relationships with friends and enemies,"[92] a mirror held up by the correspondence. He notes the pan-European network[93]

88 Emerton, 95.

89 Emerton, 158.

90 Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die Christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954/1972), 295.

91 Percy Ernst Schramm, "Der heilige Bonifaz als Mensch," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 20 (1968), 16–18, 26.

92 From the title: "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius im Spiegel seines Umgangs mit Freunden und Feinden."

93 One can gauge the English part of that network via the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* database, at http://pase.ac.uk/jsp/index.jsp. More complete and specific to Boniface, but less accessible, is Stefan Schipperges dissertation from the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuching des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes* (Mainz: 1996), which indexes everyone Boniface worked with. In its scope and detail, the study reveals the amount of networking necessary for Boniface's mission, and just how much knowledge of Boniface's involvement with others is preserved because of the correspondence.

Boniface built among friends and partners.[94] For Boniface's strategy in dealing with unjust rulers, von Padberg refers to the two letters to Æthelbald of Mercia: the first, from 754–746 (Tangl, no. 69), accompanies a set of gifts. It is a relatively rare instance of Boniface being diplomatic, meant to prepare Æthelbald for the next letter (Tangl, no. 73), in which Boniface and a synod of bishops condemn Æthelbald (with "a bombardment of bible quotes") for his immoral and sexually licentious behavior.[95] In the final analysis, the letters evince a man moulded by monastic life, which provided him with an absolute faith in the word of God and a basis for his life as a missionary and reformer, a man independent of worldly rules but difficult to work with and unable to understand or tolerate differences of opinion.[96]

Boniface certainly created an image of himself in the letters. The high level of artifice in all these letters, as part and parcel of medieval epistolary rhetoric, entails and enables rhetorical self-fashioning; we have already seen Boniface citing scripture to prove mastery in a letter asking for books by Bede (Tangl, 76). Particularly striking are the frequent citations of the apostle Paul's letters. Shannon Godlove argues that Boniface uses these citations to fashion himself after Paul,[97] and shows how this self-fashioning was persuasive enough to be accepted by his colleagues and correspondents, who responded to it in kind. The shared language and rhetoric of the correspondence is indeed multifaceted and reflective of a textual community whose influence reached all over Western Europe.

7 Mission

Without the correspondence we would know even less about Boniface's ideas about the mission, but the letters do not offer much detail. Bishop Daniel of Winchester draws the connection between Christianity and power early on in Boniface's missionary career (Tangl, no. 23), though his hypothetical representation of a dialog between Christian and non-Christian is based on late classical models and probably had little practical value.[98] Missionary efficacy set

94 Emerton, 145; von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 76–78.

95 von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 78–81.

96 von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 92–93.

97 Shannon Godlove, "In the Words of the Apostle: Pauline Apostolic Discourse in the Letters of St. Boniface and his Circle," *EME* 25, no. 3 (2017), 320–58.

98 Emerton, 28. See also John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 265: "Daniel … evidently failed to notice the logic-endangering hypocrisy of an Anglo-Saxon born on the edge of Dartmoor trying to

aside, Daniel aligns his faith firmly with earthly powers, and the correspondence indicates Boniface was of the same mind, beginning his mission the second time only after receiving the support of worldly leaders, in the letters by Pope Gregory II (Tangl, nos. 17–20) and the letter of support by Charles Martel (Tangl, no. 22). Boniface's Christianity was one of power, with at least partly the glory of the Roman Empire still associated with it,[99] and his mission more a matter of reforming the Frankish clergy and local Christians than a conversion effort.[100]

John-Henry Clay has studied the use of the word *peregrinatio* to characterize mission in the correspondence. He shows that here *peregrinatio* means a kind of exile, which differs considerably from its earliest Christian meaning of "foreignness" – the *peregrinus* is, at heart, a stranger, according to Jerome's Vulgate and Augustine's *Confessions*. For Boniface's period, self-imposed "permanent religious exile" (Clay's phrase) seems like a more appropriate translation.[101] Strikingly, Boniface uses the term only three times in letters with Continental correspondents, once in a letter to Abbot Fulrad of Saint-Denis (Tangl, no. 93) and twice in the letter to Cardinal-Deacon Gemmulus (Tangl, no. 104); all other sixteen occurrences are in letters with English correspondents. Clay concludes that the conceptualization of mission as *peregrinatio* was "uniquely Anglo-Saxon,"[102] and notes that the term is frequently found in association with specific poetic and metaphorical terminology also shared almost exclusively with English correspondents.[103] In yet another instance of a textual community formed within the larger group of correspondents, it is as if Continental readers just wouldn't understand the hardships suffered by the *peregrinus*.

To Clay's persuasive corpus analysis I would add only that if the use of *peregrinatio*, with all its metaphorical associations of pain and solitude, separates the English from Continental writers, then perhaps it is no accident that there are three occurrences in the letters to Fulrad and Gemmulus. An anxious Boniface wrote Fulrad in 752 for support when he seems to have lost everything he

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persuade the inhabitants of Central Germania that their climate was the result of God's displeasure." Rob Meens, in the chapter on sermons and penance in this volume, has a more positive outlook on Daniel's advice.

99 Rob Meens, "Het Christendom van Bonifatius," *Millennium* 19.1 (2005), 47.

100 Meens, "Het Christendom van Bonifatius," 48; he references the thesis that permeates the work of Lutz E. von Padberg, that Boniface was "missionary and reformer," the subtitle of his 2004 biography of the saint.

101 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 242–43, 246.

102 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 247.

103 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 248–53.

worked so long for, and Gemmulus, whom Claude Fleury already called an "ancien ami" of Boniface,[104] seems to have been an important ally in Rome: this letter to Gemmulus is one of the most emotional letters written to someone on the Continent. In other words, if specific discourse indicates membership of a certain group, it may also be used to invite companionship with a more private, more emotional self.

8 Prayer, Friendship, and Gifts

Request for prayers was a standard part of Christian epistolary rhetoric and is ubiquitous in the letters. Von Padberg counted 51 prayer requests and related expressions in the correspondence, pertaining to 34 different correspondents.[105] These are typically brief and formulaic, though in individual cases they may have very different specific content. The repetition of such prayer requests reinforces their weight and meaning, and according to Jan Gerchow this was noticeable particularly in letters to English correspondents.[106] Von Padberg finds four types of prayer requests.[107] First are personal requests, such as in the famous letter by Daniel of Winchester advising Boniface on the methods of conversion (Tangl, no. 23). Likewise Eangyth, writing with her daughter Bugga (Tangl, no. 14), when she asks for advice on whether to move to Rome or not, relies on Boniface's prayer in making the decision. Second are intercessory prayers, especially among fellow English people active in the mission, which shows also that intercessory prayer was deemed necessary for the mission itself.[108] Boniface asks Eadburg (Tangl, no. 65) that she pray for him in his sinful state, to keep him safe "among the dens of such wolves,"[109] and that she pray for the heathens and their salvation. Third are prayers for rulers, as in a letter dated 741 to Grifo, the palace mayor and son of Charles Martel (Tangl, no. 48), made as a kind of exchange: should Grifo rise to power after his father's death, Boniface will need his aid for the mission in Thuringia. In return, Boniface

104 Claude Fleury, *Histoire ecclésiastique* (Caen: 1781), 6.395.

105 Lutz E. von Padberg, "Zur Rolle des Gebetes im Leben des hl. Bonifatius," *Cistercienser Chronik* 103 (1996), 117.

106 Gerchow, *Die Gedenküberlieferung der Angelsachsen*, 32. Cünnen adds that this is also an element found in Augustine's letters; Janina Cünnen, "'Amicitia' in Old English Letters: Augustine's Ideas of 'Friendship' and their Reception in Eangyth's Letter to Boniface," *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 10 (1997), 44–45.

107 von Padberg, "Zur Rolle des Gebetes," 118–21.

108 von Padberg, "Zur Rolle des Gebetes," 118–19.

109 Emerton, 100.

twice states he prays for him. Von Padberg notes that requests for and offers of prayer reveal that Boniface was well aware of the political situation on the Continent as well as in England and invoked the aid of various rulers at critical moments, offering prayer for them in return.[110]

The last category von Padberg defines is that of prayers meant to create brotherhood among Christians. A letter written by bishop Torthelm of Leicester is especially insightful (Tangl, no. 47): Torthelm, responding to a letter that tells of success in the mission, sends him a gift as a pledge that "we would bear Your Holiness in mind in the celebration of Mass and in our daily prayers .... we earnestly pray you to do the same on your part."[111] An exchange of prayer, formalized in the Mass as well as included in daily devotional practice, will aid in the formation of a new people in Christ.[112] Von Padberg suggests also that for the aging Boniface such prayer requests, always addressed to English companions and frequently accompanied by complaints, admonitions, and regrets, were a way to revisit the safety of the monastery which housed him the first half of his life.[113] A late letter, addressed to the abbot of Monte Cassino, is another moving request for mutual prayer (Tangl, no. 106): "We earnestly pray that there may be between us an intimate tie of brotherly love with common prayer for the living and, for those who have passed from this life, prayers and celebration of Masses, the names of the dead being mutually exchanged."[114] Mutual prayer involves the living and the dead; the spoken act of prayer extends into another, the celebration of Mass, and besides the two praying individuals, the congregations they lead will join as well.

A rather unique letter in the correspondence (Tangl, no. 49) written (ostensibly) by three men and addressed to one woman, is from Lull, Denehard, and Burchard in Germany, who ask Abbess Cuniburg in England for her prayer while they work in Boniface's mission. The letter strikes every note discussed so far, and more: "we beseech you ... to keep us in communion with your holy congregation, and with the support of your prayers guide our little bark, worn out by the tempests of this world, into safe harbor, and that you will not refuse

110 von Padberg, "Zur Rolle des Gebetes," 120.

111 Emerton, 76; Tangl, no. 47: "...hoc est quod in sacris missarum celebritatibus et in cottidianis precibus tuae sanctitatis memoria celebrantur, optante et obnixę deprecantes nostrae fragilitatis conscii hoc idem vestra parte."

112 von Padberg, "Zur Rolle des Gebetes," 120.

113 von Padberg, "Die Persönlichkeit des Bonifatius," 77–78.

114 Emerton, 158; Tangl, no. 106: "Diligenter quoque deprecamur, ut familiaritas fraternae caritatis inter nos sit et pro viventibus oratio commonis et pro migrantibus de hoc saeculo orationes et missarum sollemnia celebrentur, cum alternatim nomina defunctorum inter nos mittantur."

to shelter us against the cruel dart of sin with the shield of your prayer."[115] It transmits and enacts the desire for community; it invokes the aid of prayer in the Christian mission, here emblematized with the familiar metaphor of the ship; and it asks for prayer as a protection against sin. As a letter by three, it already forms community, which it aims to extend with a fourth, and then more by adding the congregation. It strikes another note as well: at the end the three include "some little gifts … frankincense, pepper, and cinnamon – a very small present, but given out of heartfelt affection."[116] The letter concludes with another brief prayer, a request for corrections and a response, and one more request for prayer: one is hard-pressed to find a single letter combining more rhetorical strategies to form community than this one.

As public as the letters in the correspondence are,[117] because of their very publication and preservation as historical documents and as model letters, many are also individual expressions of love and affection. Letters are themselves gifts participating in an economy,[118] and many are the letters that accompany gifts – frequently small and practical gifts that bind giver and recipient, personally of course but also politically, by establishing goodwill.[119] Correspondence, by definition an exchange in absence, lends itself very well to expressions of friendship, and the Boniface correspondence, especially when read alongside Alcuin's slightly later correspondence, offers much insight into the early medieval idea of friendship. Hans-Werner Goetz has offered a reading of both sets of correspondence: for Boniface and his contemporaries, friendships are gifts and have a highly formal character, as if they are contracts,

115 Emerton, 55; Tangl, no. 49: "Nunc itaque ex intimis praecordiorum iliis suppliciter flagitamus, ut digneris nos habere in tuae sacrae congregationis commonione et nostram lintrem procellosis fluctibus huius mundi fatigatam tuorum oraminum praesidio ad portum salutis deducere et atra contra piaculorum spicula parma tuae orationis protegere non recuses, sicut nos quoque licet pro tuae celsitudinis statu divino subfragio singulis momentis deprecantes sumus."

116 Emerton, 56: Tangl, no. 49: "Parva quoque munusculorum transmisio scedulam istam comitatur, quae sunt tria, id est turis et piperis et cinnamomi permodia zenia, sed omni mentis affectione destinata."

117 More private messages were likely transmitted orally through the messenger, if the messenger could be trusted, such as indicated in a letter by Pope Zachary to Boniface, in Tangl, no. 87; Emerton, 139: "Your above-mentioned messenger Lullus and his companions have set forth very clearly, in part orally, in part in writing, everything which your Holiness had entrusted to them."

118 Amanda Wilcox, *The Gift of Correspondence in Classical Rome: Friendship in Cicero's Ad Familiares and Seneca's Moral Epistles* (Madison: 2012), 3.

119 On the mechanics and logistics of transporting mail and gifts, not to mention private oral messages, see Frederick Joseph Cowie, "Boniface (ca. 675–754): Archbishop, Legate and Postmaster-General," *Visible Language* 12.2 (1978), 171–82.

entered upon in a ritual act, and can be had irrespective of rank or gender (though rank and gender influence the kind of friendship). They place mutual obligations on the friends, as friends are to be truthful, faithful, and constant, and provide mutual support in times of need. Especially "old" friendships are mentioned and remembered not just for their own sake but also as a preface to a concrete request, and thus retain a pragmatic character as well.[120]

The theme of *fraternitas absentium*, well known from the correspondence of St Augustine, and specifically the *amicitia spiritualis*, thematized best in his *Confessions*, is almost omnipresent in the Boniface correspondence. "Absent friendship" is frequently illustrated with natural phenomena, especially imagery of the sea, such a powerful motif in Old English literature.[121] According to Janina Cünnen, Augustine is the main source for the theme of friendship in the letters exchanged between English correspondents; this *amicitia* is characterized by an absolute love which fuses the lovers in God; by the absolute confidence the one has in the other; by the acceptance of truth and thus criticism; and by the help and enlightenment brought by prayer.[122]

Ursula Schaefer is one of many scholars who find that the Old English elegies (particularly "The Wife's Lament") share elements with some of the letters (especially those by Eangyth, Bugga, Leoba).[123] Sims-Williams remarked on the "predilection for sea-imagery" in Ecgburg's letter (Tangl, no. 13), a "real element in the Anglo-Saxon poetic sensibility" which makes its way into the letters.[124] The letters and the elegies both thematize friendlessness, though differently – the elegy in a general sense and with no explanation for the speaker's loss of her friend, and the letters explicitly and directly; the number of such letters in the correspondence proves the importance of friendship, which by the 8th century has acquired a dimension of religiosity as well, inviting prayer also as an element of friendship.[125]

120 Hans-Werner Goetz, "'Beatus homo qui invenit amicum': The Concept of Friendship in Early Medieval Letters of the Anglo-Saxon Tradition on the Continent (Boniface, Alcuin)," *Friendship in Medieval Europe,* ed. Julian Haseldine (Sutton: 1999), 124–36.

121 Cünnen, *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten*, 92–93.

122 Cünnen, "'Amicitia' in Old English Letters," 45.

123 Ursula Schaefer, "Two Women in Need of a Friend: A Comparison of 'The Wife's Lament' and Eangyth's Letter to Boniface," in *Germanic Dialects: Linguistic and Philological Investigations*, eds. Bela Brogyanyi and Thomas Krömmelbein (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: 1986), cites from Rau, who does not include (or discuss) the letters by Berhtgyth.

124 Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800* (Cambridge: 1990), 221.

125 Schaefer, "Two Women in Need of a Friend," 518–19.

9 Women Correspondents

No modern reader can fail to notice the influential presence of women in the correspondence, frequently in connection to the theme of friendship: the women Boniface (and Lull) corresponded with were family members, close friends, and also collaborators in the mission. Boniface clearly valued the women in his life, and they wrote each other for support and advice, and with offers of spiritual and material aid.

In some letters, women speak with much anguish about themselves and their situations, inviting comparison between the voices of these women, who were either active in the mission or remained in England in sometimes difficult situations, and those we think we hear in the two Old English elegies that feature a female poetic voice, "The Wife's Lament" and "Wulf and Eadwacer."[126] Diane Watt also notes that language in the correspondence is gendered. The sea, for instance, which provided early medieval English missionaries and vernacular poets with such rich metaphors, means enclosure for women correspondents (Tangl, no. 147), but an opportunity for men to perform the Christian act of travel and mission.[127]

Perhaps the most important woman in Boniface's life was Leoba: he requested that she be buried in his tomb, a wish not granted by the Fulda abbots.[128] The correspondence unfortunately preserves only two letters related to her – one by a young Leoba (Tangl, no. 29), asking for prayers for her parents, and one a short note by Boniface (Tangl, no. 96) concerning a novice, written ca. 753–754, when Leoba was already abbess at Bischofsheim.[129] In that first letter, which Tangl dates after 732, Leoba reminds Boniface of the long friendship between him and her father, dead for eight years, and asks him to remember him in his prayers. She regards Boniface as a brother, though he would have

126 Janina Cünnen's *Fiktionale Nonnenwelten*, a comparison between the elegies in the Exeter Book and the Boniface correspondence, is possibly the most comprehensive study of these letters, and she places them in the larger context of epistolary, poetry, education, and style.

127 Watt, "A Fragmentary Archive," 419–20.

128 The wish is reported in Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae* and Hrabanus Maurus's *Martyrologium*; see Felice Lifshitz, *Religious Women in Early Carolingian Francia: A Study of Manuscript Transmission and Monastic Culture* (New York: 2014), 5; and especially Stephanie Hollis's chapter "An Elegy for the Double Monastery," in her *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church* (Woodbridge: 1992), 271–300.

129 Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, 131–32, also considers Tangl, no. 66, a letter to an unnamed nun expressing a need for mutual support through prayer. Tangl, no. 67 is a very similar letter, addressed to Leoba, Thecla, and Cynehilde, from the same time period, 742–746, a period of some difficulty in Boniface's mission.

been her senior by some 35 years. *In fratris locum* (in the place of a brother) thus carries the double meaning of a real brother, physical and material, who can protect a young woman whose mother is ill and whose father is dead, and that of spiritual brotherhood. She would indeed establish this relationship by leaving England and joining Boniface in his mission on the Continent after he had requested her aid a number of times (so Rudolf tells us).[130] Leoba asks Boniface to correct the "rustic" style of her letter, and she includes four lines of poetry, composed according to the (Aldhelmian) rules of prosody taught her by her abbess, Eadburga, introduced with the modesty topos that permeates the letter.[131] Albrecht Classen comments that the impeccable prose of the letter evidences the literary capabilities of medieval women, acquired in a monastic setting and exercised in particular through epistolary writing.[132]

The letters to Leoba's abbess, Eadburga, demonstrate the cooperation Boniface received from his female correspondents. In these four letters the professional concerns of Boniface and his colleagues intersect: three of them directly involve narrative, literacy, and writing, and the fourth is a lament for his mission. The first (Tangl, no. 10) is written before Boniface's mission to the Continent and describes a monk's vision of the afterlife. The second (Tangl, no. 30) dates from 735–736: he thanks Eadburga, "his beloved sister," for the "sacred books" she sent him. In the third (Tangl, no. 35) he asks for a copy of the letters of St Peter written in gold letters. All three participate in a discourse of literacy in which narrative strengthens faith, books help convert the heathen, and visual writing helps make carnal men pious. The fourth letter (Tangl, no. 65) is written in the difficult period from 742 to 746, when Boniface was unable to secure the bishopric in Cologne and struggled with the Frankish nobility over church reform.[133] He asks Eadburga to pray for him and his sins, and complains that the heathen is not his greatest enemy: "the treachery of false brethren

130 Shari Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure: Representing Women in Old English Literature* (New York: 2001), 52 – though I reverse her reading of Leoba's earlier relationship with Boniface as more spiritual than worldly. Given our lack of knowledge about her particular material circumstances (what would her life have been like had she not come to Germany?) this may be a distinction without a difference.

131 For a close and careful analysis of the letter and the poem, see Lisa C.M. Weston, "Where Textual Bodies Meet: Anglo-Saxon Women's Epistolary Friendships," *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, eds. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (Berlin: 2011), 235–36.

132 Albrecht Classen, "Frauenbriefe an Bonifatius: Frühmittelalterliche Literaturdenkmäler aus Literarhistorischer Sicht," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 72 (1990), 266–68.

133 Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 229–32.

surpasses the malice of unbelieving pagans."[134] Deeply concerned with the fate of his double mission of conversion and reform, he writes one of the most personal letters in the collection to a woman who is a colleague, a friend, and an equal. The letters from this period, according to Schieffer, are characterized by lament,[135] and prove that his female correspondents were a sounding board as well as a source of spiritual comfort and material support – and that women occupy a central position in the period's literary culture.[136]

The Eadburga letters prove a deep engagement with book culture, as does the letter by abbess Egburga (Tangl, no. 13), a moving epistle in which the writer speaks of her grief. She addresses Boniface as "holy father," "true friend," and "once my brother," and draws an elaborate comparison between Boniface and her dead brother. She compounds this comparison with one between herself and her dead sister – while her earthly self still has a soul fettered to the body, her sister is free to approach God. The letter is full of literary references,[137] including quotations from scripture, four references to Virgil's *Aeneid* (including "everywhere was grief and terror and the dread of death," adapted from *Aeneid* 2.369–70),[138] two citations from Aldhelm, and two from Jerome,[139] supporting Classen's claim for intellectual parity and mutual exchange between men and women in epistolary writing.[140]

These letters enable scholars to more fully appreciate the role women played in the mission and the extent to which women created agency for themselves by participating in a highly literate discourse. Excluded from most genres of writing, women turned to epistolary, a genre requiring a high level of education, and they excelled in style and substance. For many of these women, including Berhtgyth, Bugga, and Egburg, these letters remain the only evidence we have of them.[141]

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134 Emerton, 100; Tangl, no. 65: "Super omnia gravissimum: quod vicunt insidiae falsorum fratrum malitiam infidelium paganorum."

135 Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 235–36.

136 Diane Watt, "Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey," *Philological Quarterly* 91.1 (2012), 1–22.

137 Greenaway calls it a "gem" in "Saint Boniface," 44.

138 Emerton, 12; Tangl (1916), 19.

139 For a thorough analysis of the letter see Wallace, "Feminine Rhetoric and the Epistolary Tradition," 235–39.

140 Classen, "Frauenbriefe," 270–73. Sims-Williams provides a more detailed analysis of this letter, and a discussion of the writer's identity, *Religion and Literature*, 219–24.

141 See the entries for those women in the encyclopedia *Women in the Middle Ages*, eds. Katherine M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis (London: 2004), as well as the entries "Boniface, St.," "Mission and Circle of," and "Epistolary Authors, Women as." This applies to other women too, such as the 8th-century nun Burginda, whose only remaining work is one single letter

10 Conclusion

The correspondence is a crucial source for the study of Boniface and the Insular missions on the Continent, enriching the biography of a saint whose hagiography is comprehensive but superficial. These letters have become a primary source for our knowledge of the saint's personality and for any attempt at a deeper understanding of his elusive missionary practices. They provide striking texture and detail, despite the rhetorically overdetermined and formal nature of the epistolary genre.

Our understanding of the correspondence and its importance has greatly evolved in the last half century. Perhaps we should speak of the Boniface correspondence as a collection of sources rather than as a single source, given the artificiality of Tangl's construction of the correspondence as a single, chronologically organized register.[142] This organization was dictated by the centrality of Boniface's life and his relations with the popes, putting the letters by Lull in the background and relegating the prefatory Aldhelmian material to a footnote. Recent scholarship has recovered especially the work of women correspondents whose writings had been overlooked by scholars who viewed the letters primarily as historical sources for the life of Boniface.

In addition, study of the thematic and textual relationships between the letters shows that the language that at first appears to be derivative, formal, or unoriginal in fact expresses the needs and desires of a community of highly educated people dispersed over Western Europe and in great need of spiritual and sometimes material support, which they found in each other through the medium of the epistle. This broadens our understanding of the networks that were necessary for this grand project (the conversion of Germania and the reform of the Frankish church) at the expense of a frequently inflated idea of the great missionaries as solitary heroes working in a self-imposed exile.

One area of scholarship on the correspondence that would benefit from renewed attention is the editing and translating of the letters themselves. Over a hundred years have passed since Tangl's edition of the correspondence was published, and German translations by Tangl (1912) and Rau (1968), and English translations by Emerton (1940) and Talbot (1954) are dated and provide

preserved in a commentary on the *Song of Songs*. See the entry "Burginda" in *Women in the Middle Ages*. Extensive discussion of style and grammar is found in Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 212–19. The letter is missing the name of the addressee.

142 Bill Friesen, "Troubled Relations: Parallels Between the *Vita Bonifatii prima* and Bonifatian Epistolary," *The Mediaeval Journal* 4, no. 2 (2014), 1–20. Friesen states, in a footnote, that Tangl was overly reliant on the Vienna Codex ("Troubled Relations," 1), but neither the organization nor the editorial choices in Tangl's 1916 edition bear this out.

only selections. Rau is the most recent editor to discuss the three main manuscripts.[143] A new edition which does more justice in its presentation of material to the tripartite origin of the correspondence (and their copies) would be timely, as would a more complete translation of the corpus in English and German. Updated resources such as these would enable a more complete overview of the historical, literary, and social world of Boniface and his correspondents.

143 A welcome addition is Kathryn Maude's recent edition and translation of Tangl, nos. 143, 147, and 148, three letters by Berhtgyth; Maude also comments on the editorial tradition pertaining to the Vienna Codex: Kathryn Maude, "Berhtgyth's Letters to Balthard," *Medieval Feminist Forum*, Subsidia Series 7 (2017), 3–24.

CHAPTER 7

The First *Life* of Boniface: Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*

Shannon Godlove

1 Introduction: Context and Authorship

The *Vita Bonifatii* or *Liber S. Bonifatii* of Willibald of Mainz[1] is the oldest extant work of biography written in Germanic lands.[2] It heads a long chain of saints' lives written by and about the 8th-century English missionaries and their disciples, and has served as an exceptionally influential source of information about Boniface from the time of its composition to the present day.[3] Like the Boniface Correspondence, the *Vita Bonifatii* emerged from the milieu of Boniface's protégé Lull.[4] Willibald, a *presbyter* of West Saxon background living in Mainz, was commissioned by Lull and his colleague, Megingoz, the bishop of Würzburg, to write a *vita* of Boniface relatively soon after the saint's death, most likely between 763 and 768.[5] In the Prologue, Willibald tells us that already Boniface's fame was such that "religious-minded and orthodox men … in the region of Tuscany, or in the marches of Gaul, or at the portals of Germany,

1 The standard edition is Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 1–58. The standard English version is translated by C.H. Talbot, and first published in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London: 1954), 25–65, and reprinted and updated in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park: 2000). This chapter cites Noble and Head's updated version of Talbot's translation.

2 Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: 1991), 18; Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter* (*754–1200*) (Fulda: 1993), 75.

3 For more information on the *vitae* of Boniface written after and partially based on Willibald's account, see the next chapter in this volume.

4 Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* has come down to us in several manuscript versions, the earliest and most significant being Munich, CLM 1086 (ca. 800, probably from Eichstätt), Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, Aug. CXXXVI (ca. 820, from Reichenau), and the fragmentary Darmstadt, Landesbibliothek Hs. 4271 (ca. 820, from Mainz).

5 The dating of the *vita* comes from Willibald's mention of Megingoz as bishop of Würzburg, an office which he held only from 763 to 769, and his mention of Pippin (d. 768) as still living. For further details, see Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 8 ff., and Thomas F.X. Noble, "Introduction to Willibald's *The Life of Saint Boniface,*" in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (University Park: 2000), 107.

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or even in the furthest reaches of Britain" had begun to request a written account of his life and martyrdom.[6] This suggests that Willibald envisioned a larger audience for the *Vita Bonifatii* than his two local patrons and other followers and associates of Boniface; he proposed to tell the story of one of the few known martyrs of his age to the whole of Christian Europe.[7]

Although Willibald had never met Boniface,[8] he was well situated to write the story of his life. Like his subject, he probably came from Wessex, and his Latin bears the marks of the Aldhelmian style common to Boniface and several of his West Saxon correspondents.[9] He was able to gain eyewitness information about Boniface from those who knew him in life, including his disciples and followers, as well as Lull and Megingoz themselves.[10]

Willibald also had access to the saint's own words in the form of his letters, though there is some debate among scholars about the extent to which Willibald really used the letters as sources. Wilhelm Levison cited parallel phrasing and the general outline of Boniface's career in Willibald's text as evidence for his borrowing from the letters, but Bill Friesen argued that the majority of parallels between the Letters and the *Vita Bonifatii* have proven "extremely problematic and frustratingly contingent."[11] Willibald does not directly refer to or quote from the correspondence, and the *vita* fails to mention many important figures or events emphasized in the correspondence. As Walter Berschin points out, many of the important events in Boniface's life are omitted by Willibald, including his foundation of the monastery of Fulda, the apparent fact that Boniface would have rather been bishop of Cologne than of Mainz, or that he worked with Popes Zachary and Stephen II as well as Gregory II and Gregory III.[12] Conversely, the extant letters are silent about many signal events narrated by Willibald, such as the conversion-miracle story

6 Willibald, *VB*, Prologus, 2: "petentibus religiosis ac catholicis viris, quibus vel in Tusciae partibus vel Galliae terminis vel in Germaniae aditibus aut etiam in Brittaniae limitibus sancti Bonifatii martyris fama miraculorumque choruscatio perstrepuit…"; trans. Head, Prologue, 109.

7 James T. Palmer, "Hagiography and Time in the Earliest Carolingian *vitae* of St Boniface," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik,* eds. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (Vienna: 2010), 94.

8 Willibald, *VB*, Prologus, 1.

9 Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE 8 (Cambridge: 1994), 63.

10 Willibald, *VB*, c. 1, 4; trans. Head, c. 1, 111.

11 Bill Friesen, "Troubled Relations: Parallels between the *Vita Bonifatii Prima* and Bonifatian Epistolary," *The Mediaeval Journal* 4, no. 2 (2014), 17.

12 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 13; Kehl, *Kult*, 66.

of Boniface's destruction of the Oak of Jupiter.[13] Where earlier scholarship, in search of an historically "accurate" source for Boniface's life, tended to view hagiographic dimensions of the *Vita Bonifatii* with suspicion, disparaging Willibald's oversights and embellishments or seeing error (or perhaps the censorship of Lull)[14] in his deviations from the correspondence, more recent criticism has turned a curious rather than critical eye toward the *Vita Bonifatii*. James Palmer, for example, cautions against seeing such discrepancies in a negative light, reminding us that saints' lives like Willibald's are, in the first instance, exegetical texts that "shape [the past] for a range of devotional, religious, and political purposes."[15]

Palmer points to the influence of Lull as the facilitator of the intellectual and cultural environment that informed the *Vita Bonifatii* and as the individual whose views of Boniface and his legacy, enmeshed with his personal mission and Carolingian world-view, left a lasting imprint on Willibald's representation of Boniface's career.[16] Lull put together the library of "exegetical and semi-historical works and literary curiosities" which Willibald mentions as models in the preface, including the ecclesiastical histories of Hegesippus and Eusebius, and Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*.[17] Willibald states that his patrons commanded him to report the virtues and life of Boniface in the same manner as the aforesaid sources, although he does not follow them or borrow from them at all. Rather than describing the work, these references point up a continuity of tradition between hagiography and historical writing and legitimate the story of Boniface which follows by situating it within a larger framework of church histories and saints' lives.[18]

2 Style and Structure

Willibald's style was heavily influenced by Insular literary tastes. Walter Berschin even called it a work of "exile literature" written in a style popular in 8th-century England, but largely foreign to the Continent. One hallmark is Willibald's indebtedness to the 7th-century West Saxon poet Aldhelm of

13 James T. Palmer, "The 'Vigorous Rule' of Bishop Lull: Between Bonifatian Mission and Carolingian Church Reform," *EME* 13, no. 3 (2005), 256.

14 Levison, *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii*, xiii; Michael Tangl, "Das Bistum Erfurt," in *Geschichtliche Studien für A. Hauck zum 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: 1916), 119.

15 Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule,'" 256.

16 Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule,'" 275–76.

17 Willibald, *VB*, Prologus, 3; trans. Head, Prologue, 110. Like Boniface, Willibald does not appear to have known or been influenced by Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*.

18 Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 102.

Malmesbury, known for his elaborate and esoteric Latin style both in prose and verse. Aldhelm's works are filled with curious Graecisms and neologisms, rhetorically florid turns of phrase, complex syntactic structures, and frequent recourse to effects of word order and sound.[19] This highly-wrought Latin style exercised enormous influence on Boniface and Lull (who had studied for a time at Malmesbury).[20] The influence of Aldhelm on Willibald's writing can be seen in his frequent use of alliteration, multiplication of synonyms, and use of elaborate, formulaic metaphors, as well as his use of arcane diction,[21] even in relatively mundane passages. Willibald's insistent use of alliteration as a structuring principle is reminiscent of Aldhelm's blending of Latin poetics with the aesthetic features of Old English vernacular poetry.[22] As Emily Thornbury has shown, the adoption and promotion of such "exaggerated Anglo-Latinity"[23] was more than a matter of fashion or preference among the early medieval English who lived and worked on the Continent: it was "a way of demonstrating a common purpose and a shared national origin."[24] It was, as Thornbury puts it, a "private dialect" that thrived most when the English missionary community felt threatened or culturally isolated.[25] It is unsurprising, then, that Lull would choose someone like Willibald, who appears to have shared their West Saxon origins and Aldhelmian training, to write the first saintly biography of Boniface.

In the early Middle Ages, history and hagiography served a common purpose: to provide the conscientious reader with positive examples to be imitated, and negative examples to be avoided.[26] Willibald repeatedly calls attention to Boniface's holy life as a model for *imitatio*,[27] as he shows Boniface deliberately emulating Christ and his saints. Willibald begins most chapters in the *vita* with an *exordium* that outlines the virtues and qualities of Boniface to be presented

19 Michael Herren, "Boniface's Epistolary Prose Style: The Letters to the English," in *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, eds. Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury (Toronto: 2016), 20.

20 Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury, "Introduction," in *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, eds. Rebecca Stephenson and Emily V. Thornbury (Toronto: 2016), 5.

21 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 9.

22 Orchard, *Poetic Art*, 112–14.

23 Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: 2014), 205.

24 Stephenson and Thornbury, "Introduction," 6.

25 Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet*, 208.

26 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 10.

27 Willibald, *VB*, Prologus, 4: "…ex tantae rei relatione profuturum legentibus praebens exemplum, dum hiis quisque instruitur formulis et ad meliora profectus sui perfectione perducitur"; trans. Head, Prologue, 110: "…to furnish future readers with an example from the narration of these matters, so that they may be instructed by Boniface's model and led to better things by his example."

in that section,[28] and concludes most chapters with a biblical quotation or "scriptural epilogue" taken from the Epistles of Paul. Willibald's (occasionally obscure) Pauline comparisons are intended to prompt the reader into typological reflection, with each quotation calling up a host of other, related passages as well as the larger biblical contexts in which they occur. Much as Boniface used Paul's words to characterize his own experiences in his letters, Willibald's Pauline quotations ask his audience to recognize their shared membership in a Christian culture based on scriptural knowledge, and to apply that knowledge hermeneutically to interpret Boniface's life as the fulfillment of the words and experiences of the apostle in their own time.[29]

Examples of how Willibald's scriptural epilogues work can be seen in the chapters that cover the early life of Boniface, treating his childhood and education in the monasteries of Exeter and Nursling in Wessex, and his work as a teacher and respected priest in adulthood. Chapter 1 presents the reader with a typical hagiographical account of Boniface's childhood desire to enter the monastic life, and Chapters 2 and 3 focus largely on the saint's ascetic and intellectual attainments, depicting his learning and teaching as preparation for his later work.[30] Early in Chapter 3 Willibald writes:

> From the early days of [Boniface's] childhood even to infirm old age he imitated in particular the practice of the ancient fathers in daily committing to memory the writings of the prophets and apostles, the narratives of the passion of the martyrs and the Gospel teaching of our Lord. To quote the words of the Apostle: 'whether he ate or drank or whatsoever

28 Here is the *exordium* passage from the beginning of Chapter 7 of the *VB*, Willibald, *VB*, c. 7, 36: "Igitur huius viri aliquantisper meritorum documenta excerpsimus, ut, quanta se relegionis regimine per cunctos aetatis suae gradus indesinentur rexerit, brebi videlicet proferamus sermone, quoniam quidem diutinus sanctorum usus est, ut cottidię aliorum per exempla ad meliora se provehant et, descrescente dierum calculo, crescat in eis etiam intimi virtus amoris"; trans. Talbot, c. 7, 129: "we have spent no little time in recounting some of the merits of Boniface in order that we may describe, though not in detail, the powerful religious spirit that guided him throughout the whole of his life. For, as history shows, it is characteristic of the saints that, setting the example of others before their eyes, they arouse in themselves the desire for better things, and as their life draws to its close they increase the love of God in their hearts."

29 For a fuller discussion of this aspect of Boniface's letters, see Shannon Godlove, "In the Words of the Apostle: Pauline Apostolic Discourse in the Letters of St. Boniface and his Circle," *EME* 25, no. 3 (2017), 320–58.

30 Willibald mentions Boniface's study of scriptures 13 times in the first three chapters of the work. Kehl, *Kult,* 74, suggests that he may be drawing on his awareness of Boniface's fame in the field of monastic education in Wessex to present his protagonist as an ideal teacher.

> else he did, he always praised and thanked God in heart and word' (1 Cor. 10:31).[31]

Willibald depicts Boniface's continual reading and memorization of the scriptures and lives of saints and martyrs as an imitation of the fathers of the church, but also as a realization of Paul's injunction to the Corinthians to praise and thank God without ceasing. The main purpose of Boniface's study was to inform his preaching and teaching: his learning was to be used in the service of the active life. Willibald concludes his second chapter with the image of Boniface as a beloved but humble teacher, who attracted monastic men and women who "flocked to hear him and under his guidance studied the whole extent of the scriptures."[32] Willibald concludes his chapter with a scriptural epilogue:

> Guided and sustained as he was by supernatural grace, he followed both the example and the teaching of the Apostle to the Gentiles: 'Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. 1:13) … 'Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.' (2 Tim. 2:15)[33]

Willibald chooses two quotations from 2 Timothy in which Paul instructs Timothy on how to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). Appended to the conclusion of the second chapter of the *Vita Bonifatii*, these quotations encourage the reader to see the correspondence between Boniface's Christian

31 Willibald, *VB*, c. 3, 11–12: "Et ab infantia sua usque ad decrepitam aetatis senectutem praeteritorum non mediocriter patrum sapientiam imitatus est, dum prophetarum iugiter et apostolorum verba stilo sanctitatis conscripta et gloriosam martyrum passionem litterarum apicibus insertam, sed et euangelicam domini Dei nostri traditionem cottidię commendabat memoriae et secundum apostolum, 'sive manducasset sive bibisset sive aliud aliquid egisset, laudis semper praeconium et devotae fastigium iubilationis tam mente quam etiam ore persolvebat Deo' (1 Cor. 10:31)"; trans. Talbot, c. 3, 115.

32 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 10: "fama eius multis per monasteria tam virorum quam etiam virginum Christi apertissime claruit: quorum quidem quam plurimi, virili sexus robore confortati et lectionis instantia incitati, ad eum confluxere et, saluberrimum scientiae fontem potantes, numerosa scripturarum volumina legendo recensere"; trans. Talbot, c. 2, 114.

33 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 11: "Quem ita superna sublevavit gratia, ut iuxta egregii praedicatoris exemplar et gentium doctoris vocem 'formam habens sanorum verborum in fide et dilectione Iesu Christi' (2 Tim. 1:13) … 'sollicite curans se ipsum probabilem exhibere Deo, operarium inconfusibilem, recte tractantem verbum veritatis'" (2 Tim. 2:15); trans. Talbot, c. 2, 114.

education as a young monk, and his future work as a preacher and follower of the apostles.

3 Boniface: Missionary and Reformer

The picture of Boniface as monk and priest developed in the first three chapters prepares the reader for the story at the center of the narrative: Willibald's presentation of Boniface's work among the Frisian, Hessian, Bavarian, and Thuringian peoples. Chapter 4 presents Boniface's initial decision to journey to Frisia and join the mission of Willibrord, casting the saint as an Irish-style *peregrinus* who leaves his family and monastic community to travel abroad.[34] Just why Willibald chose to evoke the hagiographic topos of *peregrinatio* in this case is unclear: the historical record bears witness that Boniface in no way cut himself off from his kinsmen, but instead surrounded himself with them on the Continent.[35] In sharp contrast to the famous Irish *peregrinus* Columbanus or even his contemporary Virgil of Salzburg who never returned to their homeland, Boniface returned to England after political events in Frisia made for an "unfruitful harvest" there.[36] Palmer has suggested that the "deep cultural legacy … of Irish asceticism and Columbanian monasticism" on the Continent may lay behind Willibald's decision to cast Boniface in such a mold. By representing Boniface's first missionary journey to Frisia as inspired by ascetic practice and a humble desire to escape his growing fame in Wessex, Willibald directs attention away from the intermittent nature of Boniface's work among the Frisians and the fact that his first attempt ended in failure.[37] The conclusion of Chapter 4 strikes a somewhat defensive tone:

> It is a strange thing in the sanctity of the saints that when they perceive that their labors are frustrated for a time and bear no spiritual fruit they

34 Willibald, *VB*, ed. Levison, c. 4, 15; trans. Talbot, c. 4, 117.

35 On Boniface's kinship networks and their role in his work on the Continent, see James Palmer's contribution in Chapter 3 of this volume, and Stefan Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte 79 (Mainz: 1996).

36 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 67.

37 Boniface's first missionary journey to Frisia was brief, lasting less than all of 716. The second mission to Frisia took place from 719 to 722. His final mission to Frisia also lasted less than one year, beginning in the winter of 753 and concluding with his martyrdom in Dokkum on the 5 June 754.

> betake themselves to other places where the results are more palpable, for there is nothing to be gained if one stays in a place without reaping a harvest of souls.[38]

This passage reiterates Boniface's favorite scriptural metaphor for mission, the metaphor of the harvest adapted from Matthew 13,[39] and points out that by turning away from the Frisians for a time, Boniface is actually following Christ's own advice to his apostles. In the Great Commission, Christ instructs His messengers, saying: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet" (Matt. 10:14).

In addition to evoking the *peregrinatio* topos and offering a biblical defense for Boniface's departure, Willibald defends him against claims of inconstancy in Frisia by foreshadowing his eventual martyrdom there, stating that "he decided that if at any time he could see his way to approach the people he would minister to them the Word of God. On this purpose of his, his glorious martyrdom many years later set its seal."[40] Willibald's emphasis on Boniface's constancy may indicate a degree of discomfort, perhaps on the part of Willibald, or perhaps on the part of others, such as Alcuin or the followers of the late Willibrord, a Northumbrian missionary who remained steadfastly in Frisia throughout most of his career.[41]

Questions about exactly what kind of work Boniface saw himself as engaging in and what kind of mission Willibald interpreted Boniface as fulfilling trouble the *Vita Bonifatii* and many of its readers. Most scholars agree that Willibald portrays Boniface as man of great learning and intense devotion to the monastic life, and that Willibald endeavours to present his decision to journey to the Continent as an act of *peregrinatio*.[42] Most agree that Willibald goes out of his

38 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 17: "Sed quia sanctorum singulare munus est sanctitatis, ut, dum ad tempus suum sine spiritalis virore germinis laborem minime pollentem perspiciunt, ad alia prorsus loca foecundo laboris cum fructu migrant"; trans. Talbot, c. 4, 118.

39 On the development and use of metaphor of the mission as harvest in Boniface's letters, see John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–754* (Turnhout: 2010), 209–211, and his Appendix 2.3.

40 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 17: "si quanam in parte huius populi euangeli umquam aditus claresceret, verbi quidem Dei semina ministraret. Quod etiam, multis transactis annorum curriculis, gloriosa martyrii testificatio conprobavit"; trans. Talbot, c. 4, 118.

41 With the exception of a brief departure to convert the Danes during Radbod's revenge on the Franks. See Chapter 9 of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi,* ed. Levison, MGH SRM 7, 81–141; trans. Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head, *Soldiers of Christ* (Philadelphia: 2000), 189–212.

42 See, for example, Kehl, *Kult*, 71; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 67–68.

way to emphasize Boniface's likeness to Paul, especially because of his inclusion of the Pauline scriptural epilogues discussed above, but also because of the other frequent comparisons to Paul and the apostles and the apostolic life in general scattered throughout the *vita*.[43] Yet Ian Wood has raised questions about the extent to which Willibald's "apostolic interpretation of Boniface's life" rings true, arguing that the "narrative itself scarcely supports any reading of the saint as being primarily a missionary" and instead "shows a man rather caught up in reform and ecclesiastical organization."[44] How to reconcile these views? Is the Boniface of the *Vita Bonifatii* a bold missionary converting heathens (even where there were none)? Is he a frustrated ecclesiastical reformer being dressed up as a missionary? The answer is, both and neither.

Part of the difficulty in assessing the portrayal of Boniface in the *Vita Bonifatii* stems from Willibald's overstatement of the extent of what we might call "pure paganism" in the areas where Boniface worked. His portrayal of Boniface eradicating heathen practices and beliefs is certainly prone to literary embellishment. A typical example of such embellishment may be seen in Willibald's description of Boniface in Hessia as plunging deep into territories hitherto untouched by Christianity. Willibald describes Boniface's activities in this way:

> He turned away also from the superstitions of paganism a great multitude of people by revealing to them the path of right understanding and induced them to forsake their horrible and erroneous beliefs. When he had gathered together a sufficient number of believers he built a small chapel. Similarly, he delivered the people of Hessia, who up to that time had practiced pagan ritual, from the captivity of the devil by preaching the Gospel as far as the borders of Saxony.[45]

Irish missionaries such as Kunibert of Cologne and Killian of Würzburg had already been active in Hessia and Thuringia, and their efforts, which receive no

43 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 12 and 48; von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, 135; Kehl, *Kult*, 73; Palmer, "'Vigorous Rule,'" 256. Berschin, 48, for example, has argued that Willibald's *vita* portrays Boniface as a "paulinischen Wegbereiter und Missionar" (Pauline trailblazer and missionary).

44 Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (London: 2002), 62.

45 Willibald, VB, c. 6, 26–27: "eosque a sacrilega idulorum censura, qua sub quodam christianitatis nomine male abusi sunt, evocavit ac plurimam populi turbam, rectae patefacta intellegentiae vię, errorum deposito horrore, a malivola gentilitatis superstitione retraxit et monasterii, collecta servorum Dei congregatione, cellam construxit. Similiter et iuxta fines Saxonum Hessorum populum paganicis adhuc ritibus oberrantem a demoniorum euangelica praedicando mandata captivitate liberavit"; trans. Talbot, c. 6, 124.

mention in Willibald's *vita*, greatly enabled the success of Boniface's work in those regions. Willibald omits mention of previous missionary activity or church building, even obscuring the fact that Bavaria already had several bishops and an ecclesiastical structure that pre-dated Boniface's involvement. In this way he depicts Boniface as an heroic figure combating what Palmer refers to as "tyrannical dukes, backsliders, and heretics" and imposing a vision of order on a religious wilderness.[46] In addition to making for a more exciting story, Willibald's elision of the presence of Christians and the existence of functioning church organization in the regions where Boniface worked may also have been motivated by Lull's own interest in positioning the diocese of Mainz as a springboard for a Carolingian-supported mission to the pagan Saxons. By overemphasizing Boniface's role as a trailblazer, Lull becomes inheritor of a legacy of bold missionary action in heathen lands.[47]

Wood also notes that Willibald also gives a great deal of attention to Boniface's reform efforts, visits to Rome, and collaboration with at least two popes. Willibald's Boniface derives much of his authority from his cooperation with and obedience to the papacy from the time of his first visit to Rome.[48] Willibald also highlights Boniface's spearheading of ecclesiastical reforms, but he interprets these aspects of Boniface's career as providing leadership and pastoral care for dioceses and monasteries which he founded or which fell under his authority. In these sections of the *vita*, Willibald appears to be drawing on the Boniface correspondence, but he shapes material from the letters into a rhetorically pointed narrative in order to convey Boniface's own sense of urgency in church reform. Yet, it would be a mistake to see these aspects of Willibald's depiction of Boniface as necessarily more "true" because they have some corroboration in the letters, and other aspects, like Willibald's depiction of Boniface converting heathens as "false." Both of these images are constructs, the products of literary interpretation informed by the conventions of hagiographical narrative and the vagaries of time and place, as well as the interests and agendas of the writer and his patrons.

For us these various aspects of Willibald's representation of Boniface – reformer and missionary – may be at odds with one another, but Willibald does not present them as such. For example, Chapter 8 combines both, treating Boniface's promotion of synodal councils in Francia as well as his final mission to Frisia and his martyrdom at Dokkum. Willibald portrays Boniface's reinstitution of annual synods and councils in Francia as an integral part of his life-long work as a preacher and a legate of the Roman Church and Apostolic

46 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 154.
47 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 157.
48 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 220.

See.[49] From Willibald's perspective, the ultimate goal of Boniface's revival of Frankish church councils was pastoral.[50] While the alliances between Boniface, Carloman, and the Roman pontiffs are made apparent here, the salvation of souls, the promotion of Christian knowledge, and the unity of the Church emerge as the ultimate purposes for reform within the framework of the *vita*. Willibald conveys Boniface's sense of urgency in reforming the infrastructure of the church and shows how the revival of annual synods, as well as his careful selection and establishment of priests and bishops throughout Francia and Germania,[51] made manifest the saint's apostolic care for his churches. Willibald does not split the long section concerning Boniface's martyrdom in Frisia off on its own, though combining it with the description of Boniface's conciliar work and organization of the see of Mainz makes for a very long chapter.[52] In recounting the story of the last years of Boniface's life, Willibald presents the saint's final missionary journey to Frisia as part and parcel of his work as a reformer and ecclesiastical organizer.

Willibald's intertwining of these different aspects of Boniface's career is partially informed by the realities of the saints' life and deeds but may also show that he did not and could not share our modern conception of what it means to be a "true missionary." As Ian Wood himself points out, the "category of 'missionary' is not an early medieval one, but a modern catch-all … there was not a Latin word 'missionarius.'"[53] The words "missionary" and "mission," with all their modern imperial and cultural associations,[54] do not necessarily convey

49 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 41; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 131.

50 Though of course the revival of synods in Francia was also highly political; see the contribution to this volume by Michael E. Moore for a detailed discussion of how these synods were enmeshed with Boniface's involvement with the Frankish mayors of the palace.

51 Willibald goes on to discuss Boniface's appointment of (the other) Willibald to the see of Eichstätt and Burchard to the see of Würzburg, as well as his consecration of Lull as his successor to the see of Mainz. See Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 43–44; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 132–33.

52 Chapter 8 is twice as long as most of the other chapters, with the exception of Chapter 6, which is still two pages shorter than Chapter 8.

53 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 247. In the letters of Boniface and his circle, the Latin words which Emerton translates using the phrases "mission" or "missionary work" vary, including *praedicatio* (preaching), *ministerium* (service, ministry), *labor* (work), *opera* (service), and *peregrinatio* (pilgrimage). This indicates that medieval conceptions of what we call "missionary work" were not all-encompassing, but rather consisted of various types of religious service, including notions of pilgrimage, asceticism, and self-exile, which could be combined in various ways.

54 In *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: 2007), 302–03, David Bosch points out "that the very origin of the term 'mission,' as we still use it today, presupposes the ambience of the West's colonization of overseas territories and its subjugation of their inhabitants. Therefore, since the sixteenth century, if one said

how early medieval Christians would have perceived themselves, their work, or the work of others. It seems more likely that Willibald and Boniface himself were rather informed by a concept of *imitatio apostolorum*, one which encompasses bringing the Word of God to the heathen, but also includes the work of church organization and administration that is an essential part of establishing and maintaining the faith.[55] The Pauline Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles offer the most comprehensive and explicit biblical examples of what we would call "missionary work," and they informed Willibald's conception of what Boniface was doing in his many roles on the Continent. In Paul's letters, administration and reform are inseparable from preaching, baptism, and religious education. Representing Boniface as fulfilling these various interconnected roles, some objectively factual and others more or less embellished or constructed, contributes to Willibald's overall intention of casting Boniface as a new Paul.

4 The Felling of the "Oak of Jupiter"

On the whole, Willibald seems remarkably uninterested in the miraculous deeds of its saint, mentioning only in the most general terms a few posthumous healing miracles at the end of the work.[56] However, Willibald does include

'mission,' one in a sense also said 'colonialism.' Modern missions originated in the context of modern Western colonialism."

55 The correction of erring Christians emerges as a major theme in Willibald's treatment of Boniface's missions to the Hessians and Thuringians, reflecting the historical reality on the ground in Boniface's time. While there is some attempt by Willibald to differentiate between Boniface's missions to pagans "untouched by the preaching of the Gospel" (the Frisians, Saxons, and some Hessians) and his missions to nominal Christians in need of reform and religious education (the Thuringians, some Hessians, and the Bavarians), this distinction, so central in the modern historiography of Boniface, does not appear to be of much importance to the *vita*'s author. See Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995); James Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 402–25; and Jonathan Couser, "Inventing Paganism in Eighth-century Bavaria," *EME* 18, no. 1 (2010), 26–42.

56 Wolfert van Egmond, "Misgivings about Miracles in Carolingian Hagiography from Utrecht," in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, eds. Karin E. Olsen, Antonina Harbus, and Tette Hofstra (Leuven: 2004), 78. A handful of generic posthumous miracles of healing are mentioned at the end of Chapter 8, and Chapter 9 recounts the story of a miraculous spring being discovered at the site of Boniface's martyrdom, but this chapter is largely believed to be a later addition. For details about this late addition to the *Vita*, see Kehl, *Kult*, 63–64.

one compelling miracle story as an exception that proves the rule: Boniface's destruction of an oak tree sacred to a pagan god at a place in Hessia that Willibald calls *Gaesmere*. Based on a similar episode from the *Vita Martini* by Sulpicius Severus,[57] this miracle serves as the climax of the narrative, a powerful demonstration of God's support of Boniface's mission:

> Taking his courage in his hands (for a great crowd of pagans stood by watching and bitterly cursing in their hearts the enemy of the gods), he cut the first notch. But when he had made a superficial cut, suddenly the oak's vast bulk, shaken by a mighty blast of wind from above, crashed to the ground shivering its topmost branches into fragments in its fall. As if by the express will of God (for the brethren present had done nothing to cause it) the oak burst asunder into four parts, each part having a trunk of equal length. At the sight of this extraordinary spectacle the heathens who had been cursing ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord.[58]

This set piece dramatizes the conflict between the Christianity represented by Boniface and the paganism imagined by Willibald. The depiction of Germanic paganism in the *Vita Bonifatii* is based not on observation but rather is informed by literary motifs culled from the life of St Martin and the works of Aldhelm,[59]

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57 Compare Willibald's account of Boniface's miraculous felling of the Oak of Jupiter with Chapter 13 of the *Vita Martini* by Sulpicius Severus in *Vie de Saint Martin*, ed. Jacque Fontaine. Sources Chrétiennes 133, vol. 1 (Paris: 1967); translated by F.R. Hoare, "The Life of St. Martin of Tours," in *Soldiers of Christ*, eds. Noble and Head, 15–16. For an interesting discussion of the relationship between the felling of the Oak at Geismar, Boniface's early foundation of Fritzlar, and the network of churches established by Boniface and his followers in Hessia (many of them dedicated to Martin and Peter), see Clay, *Shadow of Death*, 235–59.

58 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7, 31: "Cumque, mentis constantia confortatus, arborem succidisset, – magna quippe aderat copia paganorum, qui et inimicum deorum suorum intra se diligentissime devotabant, – sed ad modicum quidem arbore praeciso, confestim inmensa roboris moles, divino desuper flatu exagitata, palmitum confracto culmine, corruit et quasi superni nutus solatio in quattuor etiam partes disrupta est, et quattuor ingentis magnitudinis aequali longitudine trunci absque fratrum labore adstantium apparuerunt. Quo viso, prius devotantes pagani etiam versa vice benedictionem Domino, pristina abiecta maledictione, credentes reddiderunt"; trans. Talbot, c. 6, 126–27.

59 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 412, finds evidence in Willibald's wording to suggest that Willibald knew and was influenced by Aldhelm's retelling of the story of St Martin's miracle in the *De Virginitate*, as well as being familiar with Sulpicius Severus's account in the *Vita Martini*.

and what Palmer has called the "classicizing impulse" of *interpretatio Romana*.[60] It has often been assumed that when Willibald calls the tree the "Oak of Jupiter" (*robor Iobis*) he is mapping the name and identity of a Roman deity on to the Germanic god that the Hessians "really" venerated. This god is usually assumed to be Thor, but as Palmer notes, this is an arbitrary assumption. The fact that at least one scholar, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, alternatively interpreted it as being the "Oak of Woden" should give us pause.[61]

That Willibald chose to model a scene in the life of Boniface on the *Vita Martini* is not surprising: St Martin of Tours was a profoundly popular and important saint in the Frankish church and there were churches dedicated to Martin in areas where Boniface was active and influential, including at Utrecht. In the *Vita Martini*, St Martin miraculously survives a test involving a pine tree sacred to the pagan Gauls, when they dare him to stand under the shadow of the tree while they cut it down, thinking it will fall on him and kill him. Instead, the tree falls in the opposite direction and the power and glory of the Christian God is made manifest before the Gauls, leading them to convert on the spot.[62] Willibald tones down the aspect of personal danger to the saint in his version, and makes Boniface a more active participant in the eradication of heathenism by having him handle the axe himself.

Willibald also further develops the theme, already present in the *Vita Martini*, of the saint's transformation of the pagan sacred landscape. Whereas the *Vita Martini* simply says that Martin "immediately built a church or a monastery in every place where he destroyed a pagan shrine,"[63] the *Vita Bonifatii* says: "thereupon the holy bishop took counsel with the brethren, built an oratory from the timber of the oak and dedicated it to Saint Peter the Apostle."[64] After the destruction of the oak by the Christian God (working through Boniface), the tree and the land on which it stood no longer express the old gods' power and presence in the natural world. While this miracle is isolated in Willibald's text, recent archaeological and toponymic research suggests that the practice of supplanting or countering pagan holy sites with the construction

60 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 412. *Interpretatio Romana* derives from a widespread Roman practice of describing or replacing the name of a foreign deity with the name of a Roman god somehow thought to be equivalent.

61 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 412. The German scholarship refers to the tree as the *Donareiche* (*Donar* being the German word for Thor).

62 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, trans. Hoare, c. 13, 15–16.

63 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, trans. Hoare, c. 13, 15–16.

64 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7, 31–32: "Tunc autem summae sanctitatis antistes, consilio initio cum fratribus, ligneum ex supradictae arboris metallo oratorium construxit eamque in honore sancti Petri apostoli dedicavit"; trans. Talbot, c. 6, 126–27.

of Christian buildings was widespread throughout the area of Boniface's missionary work.[65] In depicting Boniface's role in transforming the Hessians' "Oak of Jupiter" into an *oratorio ... in honore sancti Petri apostoli*, Willibald merges history and legend.

5 The Martyrdom of Boniface

Willibald's account of Boniface's martyrdom on his final journey to Frisia has been discussed extensively. Questions have emerged over the motivations of the band of Frisians who overtook Boniface's camp on that morning in Dokkum, the nature of their attack, the number of companions who perished with Boniface,[66] as well as the veracity of the account of the pagans' theft and Christians' recovery of the caskets full of books.[67] At every turn, Willibald heightens the pathos of Boniface's death scene by means of evocative imagery and literary allusion. Willibald powerfully combines two world views, two traditions: Boniface and his companions embody the ethos of Old English heroic and elegiac poetry, and are described like a Germanic warrior-band, boldly displaying steadfast courage in the face of certain doom.[68] At the same time, Willibald depicts them as latter-day apostles, whose willingness to endure martyrdom for the faith ultimately fulfills their *imitatio apostolorum*. By bringing these two strands together, Willibald fashions an image of Boniface as a Christian hero who would appeal not only to the primarily English Christians who were his most immediate audience but also to the newly converted or Christianized Germanic peoples in the regions where Boniface and his successors were active and where his cult would later flourish.[69]

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65 Clay, *Shadow of Death*, 235–59.

66 Richard E. Sullivan points out in "The Carolingian Missionary and the Pagan," *Christian Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot: 1994), 706–07 that "two different accounts list the number that died with Boniface as fifty and fifty-three; see *E martyrologio Fuldense*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG (Hanover: 1905), 60; *Bedae continuatio*, anno 754, ed. Charles Plummer, vol. I, 362."

67 Michel Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife: How the Ragyndrudis Codex came to be a *Vita Bonifatii*," *Heroic Age* 10 (2007). Accessed 16 April 2010. www.heroicage.org/issues/10/aaij.html.

68 Henry Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (London: 1991), 227–28.

69 James T. Palmer, "The Frankish Cult of Martyrs and the Case of the Two Saints Boniface," *Revue bénédictine* 113, no. 2 (2004), 333; Judith Beall, "The Barbarian Ethos: The *Germania*, *Beowulf*, and *The Life of St Boniface*," in *The Middle Ages in Texts and Texture: Reflections on Medieval Sources*, ed. Jason Glenn (Toronto: 2011), 41.

In Chapter 8 of the *Vita Bonifatii*, Willibald presents Boniface's decision to travel to Frisia as foreordained by God and personally meaningful for Boniface, who deliberately chooses to end his life in the dangerous, marshy, and still pagan parts of Frisia "from which he had departed in body though not in spirit" many years before.[70] Willibald signals a shift to the heroic in his treatment of Boniface's boat journey to Frisia. Boniface had previously made sailed there twice without incident, but now the previously peaceful voyage is described as potentially threatening and dangerous.[71] The perilous sea journey is a staple of poems such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *Andreas*, attesting to the powerful symbolic association of the sea with suffering and death in the Old English literary tradition. According to Frederick Holson, in classical, patristic, and Old English literature, the "journey on or to the sea indicates a change in ontological or social status … [there is] something of the heroic about anyone who is bold enough to travel on the sea at all," allowing the sea-goer to be "born into the heroic world."[72] As Willibald shows Boniface perilously crossing the liminal space of the sea one last time, he foreshadows Boniface's eventual crossing over into the heavenly realm of the saints using language that evokes the apostle Paul's accounts of his own trials and suffering in 2 Corinthians 11:23–29.[73]

Willibald's shift to the heroic shows the aged Boniface in vigorous action: traversing Frisia, destroying pagan worship, overthrowing temples, and building churches,[74] the saint is shaped into the type of the soldier of Christ. Willibald presses upon the reader the apostolic significance of the saint's last mission by comparing Boniface and the company of priests, deacons, and monks with whom he worked and died with the apostles of Christ. Assisted by "Wintrug, Walthere, Ethelhere, priests; Hamrind, Scirbald, and Bosa, deacons; Wachar, Gundaecer, Illehere and Hathowulf, monks,"[75] Willibald tells us, Boniface and his *chorepiscopus* Eoban

70 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 46: "ad Fresiam, olim corpore, non quidem mente omisam"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 133.

71 Compare the accounts of Boniface's first and second journeys to Frisia in Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 16 and 23; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 117 and 122.

72 Frederick Holson, "Old English Sea Imagery and the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*," *Yearbook of English Studies* 12 (1982), 213–14, 215.

73 See also Luke's dramatic recounting of Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27.

74 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 47: "Per omnem igitur Fresiam pergens, verbum Domini, paganico repulso ritu et erraneo gentilitatis more destructo, instanter praedicabat ęcclesiasque, numine confracto dilubrorum, ingenti studio fabricavit. Et multa iam milia hominum, virorum ac mulierum, sed et parvulorum cum commilitione suo chorepiscopo Eoban baptizavit"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 134.

75 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 48: "Wintrung et Waltheri, simul et Ęthelheri, sacerdotali presbiteratus officio praeditis; Hamund, Scirbald et Bosa, levitarum obsequio deputatis; Wacchar et

> were still spreading the seed of the eternal life far and wide with great success and were so united in spirit that, in accordance with the teaching of apostolic practice they were 'of one heart and soul' (Acts 4:32). Thus they deserved to share in the same crown of martyrdom and the same final eternal reward.[76]

This biblical passage cited here runs:

> 32. And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul. Neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but all things were common unto them. 33. And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord: and great grace was in them all.[77]

This is the *Vita Bonifatii*'s only direct allusion to the Acts of the Apostles, and it is very carefully placed. The inclusion of this comparison implies that the spiritual unity and common, apostolic life of Boniface and his fellow missionaries will be rewarded with a common, apostolic death: martyrdom. This comparison becomes even more pointed when we notice that of the over fifty companions who are said to have died at Dokkum with Boniface, Willibald mentions only ten names – three priests, three deacons, and four monks. These ten men, plus Boniface and his suffragan bishop Eoban, total twelve: the named and martyred apostles to the Frisians.

On the morning of the confirmation ceremony, these men – Boniface's "picked number of personal followers"[78] – experience a dramatic shift in fortune:

> When the appointed day arrived and the morning light was breaking through the clouds after sunrise, enemies came instead of friends, new executioners in place of new worshippers of the faith. A vast number of

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Gundaecer, Illehere et Hathovulf, monasteriali monachorum ordine sublevatis"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 135.

76 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 48: "Qui etiam in tantum vitae aeternae semen cum sancto Bonifatio late per populum devulgantes, domino Deo patrocinante, diffamaverunt, ut quibus iuxta apostolicae institutionis normam 'cor erat unum et anima una' (Acts 4:32) una eademque et palma esset marteri et remuneratio triumphi"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 135.

77 Acts 4:32–33. The translation above is taken from Douay-Rheims version.

78 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 49: "suorum tantum stipatus clientum numero"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 135.

> foes armed with spears and shields rushed into the camp brandishing their weapons.[79]

Willibald's representation of the scene of Boniface's martyrdom as a sudden turnabout or reversal of expectation parallels the biblical account of Jesus being taken in the Garden of Gethsemane,[80] but it also appears to reflect a pervasive rhetorical trope in Old English heroic poetry and historiography of depicting momentous events as *edwenden*, a shocking and unforeseen change.[81]

Boniface's last words to his companions play on the conventions of the heroic speech of a war-leader to his thanes by preaching the radical pacifism of the *miles Christi* whose sword is God and whose shield is faith. When the attendants at camp reach for their weapons to defend themselves and their leader, Boniface gathers the holy relics which were his most precious treasures and implores the men to put down their weapons and "endure with steadfast mind the sudden onslaught of death so that you may be able to reign evermore with Christ."[82] As Judith Beall notes, "thus [Boniface] saved his companions and like the victorious leader of a war-band, enabled them to share in a common victory."[83]

Willibald's account goes on to describe how the "pagans," drunk and lusting after gold and silver, seize a chest which they believe is filled with riches and then turn on each other, killing many of their own number in a dispute over how to divide the spoils. Opening the chest only to find holy books instead of treasure, the attackers throw the contents of the chest all over the marshy

79 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 49: "Cum autem praedictus dies inluxisset et aurora lucis, orto iam sole, prorumperet, tunc etiam versa vice pro amicis inimici et novi denique lictores pro noviciis fidei cultoribus advenerant, hostiumque ingens in castra, bibrantibus armis, astata ac scutata inruerat multitudo"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 135.

80 Marc-Aeilko Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben: Der Tod des Bonifatius im Spiegel der Bonifatiusviten," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor Stasch (Fulda: 2004), 120.

81 The theme of sudden reversal in *Beowulf* has received a good deal of attention in the critical literature: see Phyllis R. Brown, "Cycles and Change in *Beowulf*," in *Manuscripts, Narrative, Lexicon: Essays on Literary and Cultural Transmission in Honor of Whitney F. Bolton*, eds. Robert Boenig and Kathleen Davis (Lewisburg: 2000), 183–86; Andrew Scheil, "The Historiographic Dimensions of *Beowulf*," *JEGP: Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107.3 (2008), 289–90. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 228, has also compared this scene to the famous saga of "Cynewulf and Cyneheard" from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, entered under the year 755 for 757.

82 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 50: "'sed subitaneum hic constanter subite mortis articulum, ut regnare cum Christo possitis in evum'"; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 136.

83 Beall, "Barbarian Ethos," 40.

ground, yet the books are miraculously saved and recovered intact through the intervention God and the prayers of Boniface. The emphasis on the search for treasure too has parallels in Old English heroic literature, as it often plays an important role as the motivation for bold deeds, both good and evil.[84] However, as Beall points out, Willibald transforms the "practical and symbolic role" of treasure in Germanic society: instead of gold and silver, the Frisian pagans find the true treasure of holy learning and relics, but, steeped as they are in sin, they do not know what they have and cast them away.[85] The Christian reader, however, can discern another form of treasure in play: "Willibald's *Life*, then, is a kind of *Beowulf* in reverse. Here, the deceased warrior is not buried uselessly, with a useless treasure, instead, he actually becomes the treasure, for his relics are a channel for spiritual grace to the living. He also becomes a living defender and savior of his fellow warriors – the monks and the clergy – and the Christian people of Fulda for all time to come."[86] In these ways, Willibald articulates a two-fold image of Boniface as victorious Germanic hero surrounded by his *comitatus* and as Pauline apostle surrounded by his loyal disciples, bringing together separate strands and traditions to create a compelling new saint.

This is the image Willibald would like us to take away from his work, but such a valorizing reading of the *Vita Bonifatii* can obscure the real historical and political ramifications of Boniface's actions on the Continent, especially in Frisia at the end of his life. John P. Hermann has cautioned against an uncritical, "blandly spiritualizing" acceptance of Willibald's account of events at Dokkum, pointing out that Willibald had every reason to portray Boniface as the "supreme example of the historical meld of Christianity with Germanic … heroism" and the Frisian attackers as greedy "heathen butchers" whose eventual annihilation by Frankish troops was the will of God.[87] Hermann reminds us that Boniface's work in Frisia was necessarily political as well as spiritual, and that it is possible that the Frisians who arrived that morning at Dokkum were not "brigands" but part of a Frisian resistance to Frankish political aggression and imperialism, and that they had (rightly) identified Boniface and his Christian missionaries as being party to that agenda. The *Vita Bonifatii*'s portrayal of the Frankish military retaliation for the Frisians' killing of Boniface and his companions seeks to justify a brutal act of slaughter because, Willibald claims,

84 Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 228.

85 Beall, "Barbarian Ethos," 41.

86 Beall, "Barbarian Ethos," 41.

87 John P. Hermann, "Boniface and Dokkum: Terror, Repetition, Allegory," *Medievalia et Human-istica*, New Series 22, ed. Paul Maurice Clogan (London: 1995), 11, 2, 6; Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 54; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 137.

it led to the conversion of the Frisians to Christianity.[88] Yet, Hermann explains, the Frankish revenge led by Pippin was largely a pretext for outright invasion and was massive "enough to bring about the political and cultural capitulation of the large free Frisian population north of Utrecht."[89] An unquestioning acceptance of Willibald's metaphorical and symbolic language of spiritual warfare elides the historical reality of violence perpetrated by the Franks upon the Frisians and thus re-enacts their "cultural erasure."[90] While we need not go so far as to say, as Hermann does, that Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* is a work of "propaganda, an ideological weapon,"[91] his caution against eulogizing, sympathetic readings of Willibald's narrative and the tendency of scholarship overlook the situation of the Frisians serves as an important intervention in the critical discourse of Boniface studies.

6 Conclusion

The final chapter of the *Vita Bonifatii* ends with the much-contested journey of Boniface's remains from Utrecht to Mainz to Fulda. Willibald tells that Lull sent a ship from Mainz to Utrecht to bring the body of Boniface to Fulda, where Boniface himself had asked to be interred, but by then the *praefectus urbis* of Utrecht claimed to have orders from Pippin to keep Boniface's remains in the church there. This is the first intimation of the later rivalry among Utrecht, Mainz, and Fulda for control of Boniface and his legacy. Willibald reports that the people of Utrecht were persuaded to release Boniface's body to the delegation from Mainz via divine intervention: the bells of the Utrecht church begin to ring out of their own accord, signifying that the body of the holy man should be given over. The saint's body arrives in Mainz accompanied by the spontaneous celebration of the people and is eventually carried to Fulda, where it is laid in a new sarcophagus within the church. While Willibald's account of the movement of Boniface's body between these three religious centres is the most extensive, later hagiographic treatments of Boniface, especially the Fulda-based account in the *Vita Sturmi* by Eigil and the Mainz-based account of the anonymous *Vita quarta Bonifatii,* will fill out this story, adding their own details and counter-narratives based on local traditions.

88 Hermann, "Boniface and Dokkum," 25.
89 Hermann, "Boniface and Dokkum," 5.
90 Hermann, "Boniface and Dokkum," 25.
91 Hermann, "Boniface and Dokkum," 25.

Chapter 8 ends with a brief and rather perfunctory recitation of posthumous healing miracles performed at Boniface's tomb.[92] A ninth chapter was added around the year 760, reporting a miracle in which a spring of fresh water was discovered through the aid of Boniface and his companions at Dokkum, where a monastery and church were being built on the site of their martyrdom. This chapter, absent from some manuscripts of the *Vita Bonifatii*, was perhaps added out of dissatisfaction with the dearth of miracle stories in Willibald's text; indeed, later hagiographers of Boniface faced criticism for portraying Boniface without the customary litany of edifying miracles.[93]

If, as seems most likely, Chapter 8 originally formed the final chapter of Willibald's text,[94] the *Vita Bonifatii* ends with a rehearsal of the circumstances of Boniface's life and martyrdom, that is, the fundamental information necessary for Boniface's commemoration as a saint. Petra Kehl has suggested that the remarkably regular structure of the *vita*, with its use of Pauline scriptural epilogues at the ends of chapters, may indicate that the work was crafted to be read aloud, chapter by chapter, perhaps one chapter a day for the week leading up to St Boniface's feast day.[95] Walter Berschin's observation of the symmetry of the *Vita Bonifatii*'s scriptural epilogues supports this assertion, as he notices that the first epilogue consists of a "*Herrenwort*," that is, the words of Christ from the Gospel of Matthew, followed by six Pauline quotations, and concluding with a "doxology," the "Amen" which forms the last word of the original text.[96] The multiplication of Pauline scriptural epilogues in Chapters 2 through 7 forms a kind of spiritual *gradus*, a sequence of correspondences which accumulate in the mind of the reader who recognizes the biblical texts and recalls their scriptural contexts and significance.[97] By ending Chapter 8 with a recapitulation of Boniface's martyrdom as an historical event, datable by religious and secular calendars, instead of another scriptural comparison, Willibald indicates to his readers that Boniface, by dying for the faith, has fulfilled the typological comparison.[98]

92 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 55–56; trans. Talbot, c. 8, 139.

93 See van Egmond, "Misgivings about Miracles," 69–79.

94 Kehl, *Kult*, 64.

95 Kehl, *Kult*, 64, 77–78, explains that liturgical veneration of Boniface occurred first in Dokkum and Utrecht as well as in England soon after his martyrdom, although the earliest evidence for the celebration of the saint's feast day on June 5 does not appear until the *Vita altera Bonifatii* in the first half of the 9th century.

96 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 12.

97 For a detailed analysis of the biblical quotations embedded in Willibald's *VB*, see Shannon Godlove, "Apostolic Discourse and Christian Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature," PhD Diss. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: 2010), 123–88.

98 von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, 135.

The saint, still alive to the memory of many of Willibald's contemporaries, moved from historical time into the eternal and cyclical time of the saints. In his fulfillment of the type of Paul, Boniface no longer needed to be compared to him, but could take his place in the liturgical calendar and in the memories of Christians alongside the Apostle.[99] As the cult of St Boniface developed and spread across Europe, writers from other sites associated with Boniface and his legacy would write their own versions of his story reflecting local traditions, rivalries, and timely preoccupations, creating multiple images of the saint which co-existed and often contradicted one another. Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* stands behind them all as the primary and most influential account of Boniface's life.

99 Kehl, *Kult*, 126.

CHAPTER 8

The Later Medieval *Vitae Bonifatii*

Shannon Godlove

> Ein endgültiges Bonifatiusbild gibt es nicht; jede Zeit schreibt es neu für sich.
>
> WALTER BERSCHIN, *Biographie und Epochenstil*[1]

1 Introduction

Hagiography is a paradoxical genre. Writers of saints' lives seek to blur their subjects' individual traits and transform their lives into a "fragment of eternity,"[2] even as they endeavour to record their communities' memories about the saint and draw that eternal figure closer to them and their world. Boniface left behind a vast network of disciples and a number of monastic foundations and episcopal centres, each with a claim to his legacy and cult. Many of these places, including Mainz, Fulda, and Utrecht, went on to produce their own hagiographical accounts of Boniface and his associates during the Middle Ages, interpreting his life through commonplace tropes of sanctity, yet offering distinctly local representations of their saint. This chapter will focus on the five *Lives* of Boniface written after Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, between the late 8th and mid-11th centuries.[3]

Many images of Boniface emerge from these five medieval *vitae*: the preacher, the mentor, the bishop, the church organizer, the reformer, the Christianizer, the feller of pagan oak trees, the monastic founder, the hero-martyr, the spiritual father. Some of these Bonifaces have grounding in what might be called

1 Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: 1991), 14: "there is no definitive image of Boniface; every era writes Boniface anew" (translation my own). This chapter, like the one before it, is greatly indebted to Berschin's work as well as to the following studies: James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World* (Turnhout: 2009); Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (London: 2002), and Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter* (*754–1200*) (Fulda: 1993).

2 André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: 1997), 7.

3 There are also several *vitae* written about Boniface's disciples where Boniface features largely. These include Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, Hygeburg of Heidenheim's *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, and Eigil's *Vita Sturmi*. Limitations of space and scope do not permit treatment of these works here. For general overviews, see Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 18–50.

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historical facts, whereas others are to greater or lesser extents literary or historical fictions crafted to serve a particular contemporary agenda or reflect the ever-shifting workings of collective memory within a particular community. In these ways the *vitae* of Boniface reveal to us the preoccupations of their authors and the communities they represented, the concerns and interests of their times, and what Boniface meant to them, or could be made to mean, in a particular context.

A comparison of the *vitae* enables us to see how each hagiographer and each community drew upon earlier saints' lives and sources of information about Boniface, allowing us to make observations not only about how Boniface's saintly image was shaped and reshaped, but also about the history of textual reception. Some of these *vitae*, including Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, have profoundly influenced the development of Boniface's image over time and have become well-known, while others, such as the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, have largely remained obscure and are only now beginning to be studied in detail, in part because they are available only in Latin. The sections below provide a brief overview and discussion of notable historical and literary characteristics, situating each *vita* in its time and place of composition. Special attention is given to the ways in which these *vitae* construct differing representations of Boniface based on local traditions and contemporary needs as well as the texts' comparisons of Boniface to other saints, especially the Apostle Paul and St Martin. The *vitae* are of varying length and substance. Some, such as *Vita tertia Bonifatii* and *Vita quinta Bonifatii*, are little more than abridgements of Willibald's *Vita*, whereas others, such as Otloh of St Emmeram's 11th-century *Vita Bonifatii* are more complex and original literary compositions, although they too owe a debt to Willibald's work.

2 The *Vita altera Bonifatii*

The *Vita altera Bonifatii* provides a fascinating insight into the thought-world and literary and exegetical traditions circulating in Utrecht in the 9th century.[4] After Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, the *Vita altera* is the first work dedicated solely to Boniface. Once believed to have been written by Bishop Radbod of Utrecht (899–917), the *Vita altera* now is considered to only have been copied and

4 The standard edition is *Vita altera Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 62–78.

possibly revised by Radbod before he sent it on to the Abbot of Fulda.[5] Several pieces of evidence point to the *Vita altera* having been composed by an anonymous priest at the church of St Martin in Utrecht sometime in the first half of the 9th century, since the author closely ties Boniface to Frisia and frequently compares him to the church's patron. Moreover, he claims to have consulted an elderly woman who witnessed the attack on Boniface and his companions in 754 at Dokkum (here named as the site of Boniface's martyrdom for the first time), and who reported the iconic scene of Boniface defending himself with a Gospel book raised over his head as he received his death blow.[6] This may merely be a hagiographic trope, but if there is any truth to the story of the eyewitness, the woman must have been consulted in the first half of the 9th century. Perhaps more convincing evidence for dating the *Vita altera* is the way the author appears to have viewed the Vikings. He begins the account of the early life of Boniface with an excursus on the holy merits of the island of Britannia. In this passage, the author proclaims the war-like valor of the Angles, who have successfully resisted the attacks of hostile *pyratae* from the North.[7] As Ian Wood points out, this casual language suggests that the *Vita altera* was "written at a time when the Vikings were still a relatively minor threat to the Frisian church … [implying] a date before the 830s." That would rule out Radbod as an author, since he lived through the worst attacks of the Vikings and usually describes them using stronger terms.[8] Finally, the *Vita altera* or some text very like it appears to have been used as a source by Altfrid of Muenster when he wrote his *Vita Liudgeri* between 839 and 849, giving us a *terminus ante quem*.[9]

The *Vita altera* has been described by Richard Broome as a "highly metaphorical, even metaphysical text which presents Boniface's career … as a constant struggle against various foes and as an attempt to cure mens' inner

5 Wilhelm Levison, "Praefatio," in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905) xlviii-lvi; Stephanie Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz: Die Überlieferung vom 8. bis 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Bonifatius im Mainz*, ed. Barbara Nichtweiß (Mainz: 2005), 354; James T. Palmer, "Hagiography and Time in the Earliest Carolingian *vitae* of St Boniface," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik,* eds. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (Vienna: 2010), 95. The earliest manuscript witness is from the 14th century and lists Radbod as the author, but this appears to have been based on the version edited by Radbod and presented to the Abbot of Fulda.

6 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 14; *VaB*, c. 16, 73.

7 *VaB*, c. 6, 66.

8 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 103; Levison, "Praefatio," xlix-liv.

9 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 14–16, argues for a date around 825, but Wood, *Missionary Life*, 103, and Levison, "Praefatio," xlix-liv, consider a date in the 830s or 840s possible.

maladies."[10] It focuses less on promoting a cult of Boniface and more on arguing for Boniface as a "spiritual doctor" whose preaching, apostolic zeal, and pursuit of martyrdom inspire faith and heal the souls of those whom he converted during his life as well as those who read about his deeds after his death. Light on miracle stories and heavy on theological musings and comparisons of Boniface to other saints,[11] the *Vita altera* appears to have been written primarily for a monastic audience (probably the monks of St Martin's in Utrecht)[12] who could appreciate a multifaceted, moralizing portrayal of Boniface. For the author of the *Vita altera*, Boniface is not only a healer of souls,[13] he is also a "doer of good" (an allegorical reading of the name *Bonifatius* as *bonum facere* in Latin).[14]

While the Utrecht author shows Boniface deeply enmeshed in the Frisian mission, the *Vita altera* also seems to float free of the political and religious entanglements, controversies, reform councils, and worldly preoccupations detailed in the other medieval *vitae* of the saint. The result is a biography that seems at times so detached from reality, so suffused with literary allusions and symbolic renderings as to border on the surreal. These qualities are most apparent in the descriptions of Boniface's encounters with a wild Frisian landscape inhabited by the fauns, satyrs, dryads, and *napeae* (dell nymphs) of Greco-Roman myth:

> And beforehand certain [locals] cultivated their groves and temples of demons and ghosts. But Boniface, carrying by hand a divine scythe, banished totally all of the fauns and satyrs, which many pagans called the gods of the woods; similarly, he persuaded the dryads and dell-nymphs and other sorcerers of trifling divine portents to abandon all the Christians … this man (full of the spirit of God) constructed a famous monastery and excellent churches, as well as altars suitable for divine sacrifice, in the places from which the abovementioned vanities were expelled;

10 Richard Broome, "Approaches to Community and Otherness in the Late Merovingian and Early Carolingian Periods," PhD Diss. (University of Leeds: 2014), 212.

11 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 106. The introduction to the *vita* gives an extensive list of saints with whom Boniface is to be compared and associated including Saints Peter and Paul, Stephen, Agnes, Thecla, Agatha, Silvester, Basil, Martin, anchorites from Egypt, Ethiopia, and India, and two more recent saints from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, Fursey and Willibrord. James Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 104, has called this a "saintly geneaology."

12 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 106.

13 *VaB*, c. 20, 76.

14 *VaB*, c. 4, 64.

> and there he decided to invoke the name of the God of Life, where the idols of death had long been cherished by the people.[15]

This passage has been called an "armchair exercise" in imagining Germanic paganism[16] and an example of "pure, unadulterated *interpretatio Romana,*"[17] but this bizarre account of Boniface subduing a pagan landscape inhabited by otherworldly classical beings nonetheless serves a narrative purpose. As James Palmer points out, these creatures function as personifications of the concept of paganism itself; the author chooses to describe paganism and the Frisian landscape in terms of clichés and classical literary allusions (especially to Virgil's *Georgics* and Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*)[18] rather than refer to experience or local knowledge.[19] The presence of such outlandish beings signals an extreme alterity that is further amplified by the author's descriptions of the Frisian people as "wild," "brutish and barbarous," and living "like fish in lakes by which they are surrounded on all sides."[20] The *dei silvestres* and the fish-like Frisians of the *Vita altera* are not portrayed as "real beings, but [rather as] a device for identifying a frontier: the people of Germania and also Frisia Ulterior are 'Other.'"[21] As Palmer reminds us, to delineate the Other is to define the Self: the purpose of such passages in the *Vita altera* is to project Boniface as bringing order to a chaotic landscape by establishing Christian worship and Christian values.[22] This Boniface so utterly transforms the land and people through his forceful uprooting of paganism and his construction of churches

15 *VaB*, c. 8, 68: "Et illi quidem antea in suis lucis ac delubris larvas lemuresque coluerant; sed Bonifacius, falcem manu tenens divinam, omnes faunos et sathyros, quos nonnulli paganorum silvestres deos appellant, funditus extirpavit. Similiter autem et driades napeasque et cetera huiusmodi magis portenta quam numina christianis omnibus nauci pendere persuasit. Verum quia non sufficit, si mala deiciantur, nisi et bona stabiliantur, sicut non sufficit, si evellas et destruas, nisi eciam edifices et plantes, vir iste spiritu Dei plenus in locis, a quibus supradictas vanitates expulerat, ilico monasteria inclita et basilicas eximias, altaria quoque divinis sacrificiis apta construxit ibique invocari statuit nomen Dei vivi, ubi mortua ydola ab indigenis eatenus colebantur." Translation by James T. Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 415.

16 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 103, 251.

17 Broome, "Approaches to Community," 214.

18 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 416; 407–08. Wood, *Missionary Life*, 251.

19 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 415.

20 *VaB*, c. 9, 68: "Ac primum Fresonibus, quibus iam antea predicaverat, navigio revectus est, qui fere, quemadmodum et pisces, morantur in aquis, quibus ita undique concluduntur, ut raro ad exteras regiones accessum habeant, nisi navibus subvehantur. Hos remotos a ceteris nationibus ideoque brutos ac barbaros celestis seminiverbius adiit."

21 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 105.

22 Palmer, "Defining Paganism," 425.

and altars that the Christian author of the Utrecht *Vita altera* no longer identifies with the people who are presumably his own ancestors.[23]

In this way, the *Vita altera* strives to portray Utrecht and its surrounding areas as having been fully integrated into Christendom through the heroic deeds of Boniface, who is also frequently shown working together with Willibrord. The *Vita altera*'s timeline of Boniface's career departs from historical chronology and other sources (intentionally or not) to portray Boniface and Willibrord as equals working harmoniously together in a joint missionary endeavor.[24] The Utrecht priest makes Boniface's desire to be a missionary in Frisia a main point of discussion in each of his three meetings with popes in Rome.[25] When Boniface witnesses a heavenly vision of Willibrord's death in the *Vita altera*, he immediately departs for Frisia to mourn his friend and fellow missionary, as well as to assume responsibility for Willibrord's flock, and experience his own long-awaited martyrdom.[26] The Holy Spirit reveals to him that he must travel by ship to Utrecht to "take up his shepherd's sling with its stones and once again engage in a struggle with the Philistine Goliath" of paganism, and comfort those whom Willibrord had left behind.[27] In a moving scene, Boniface arrives in Utrecht and

> ...he prayed with those who prayed, groaned with those who groaned, wept with those who lamented, and mourned violently with those who beat their breasts for Willibrord, for, indeed, he himself had been devoted and bound to that father by such a great love.[28]

In reality, fourteen years lapsed between Willibrord's death and Boniface's arrival in Frisia, but by reordering events the hagiographer is able to draw a straighter line between these saints of the Frisian church. In this way he fills in a gap left by Bede in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, which includes ample discussion of Willibrord's Frisian mission, but no mention of Boniface.[29]

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23 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 105.

24 *VaB*, c. 9–10; Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 104.

25 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*, 243.

26 *VaB*, c. 13. This is in marked contrast to the awkward scene in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, c. 5, where Boniface refuses Willibrord's offer to take over for him as archbishop.

27 *VaB*, c. 13, 71: "sibi iterum peram cum lapidibus suis sumendam, iterum cum Golyath Phylistheo bellum gerendum."

28 *VaB*, c. 13, 72: "Cum hiis ergo processit ad ecclesiam et cum orantibus oravit, cum gementibus gemuit, cum lamentatibus flevit, cum plangentibus Willibrordum acriter planxit; nam et ipse tanto patri summo amore devinctus fuerat et confederatus."

29 Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 104.

The Utrecht author often compares his subject to the Old Testament figure of David, describing Boniface as heroically battling the Goliath of paganism with the "most clear stones of divine law" ("cum limpidissimis divine legis lapidibus") and healing the spiritual wounds of his flock like David healing Saul.[30] These Davidic comparisons fit in well with the martial imagery used throughout the *Vita altera*, particularly in scenes which depict Boniface as a lone warrior battling paganism, debauchery, or heresy.[31]

In addition to being depicted as a warrior in the style of David, Boniface is also portrayed as a preacher and martyr following in the footsteps of St Paul and as a bishop in the tradition of St Martin. These comparisons may have been prompted in part by local and liturgical parallels: both Boniface and Paul were patron saints of the church at Dokkum built on the site of Boniface's martyrdom, and Martin was the patron saint of the church in Utrecht where the author was writing. The comparisons to Martin are concentrated near the beginning of the *Vita altera* in Chapters 3 through 5, and primarily parallel Martin's good works and learning with that of Boniface. The local significance of Martin is paramount here; the author uses the parallels between the saints to make a point about how the veneration of Martin binds together the episcopal cities of Tours, Utrecht, and Mainz, perhaps implying that these places are likewise unified in their veneration for Boniface.[32] The Utrecht priest also utilizes the mention of Martin to comment on his own times, criticizing those in his community who he feels are overly concerned with outward grandeur and ostentatious display, wishing to adorn St. Martin's church with vain ornament. This, he says, is not the way to show one's love and veneration for the saints. Instead, the author holds up the example of Boniface as the "wise architect" who adorned the churches of Mainz and Utrecht with hope and belief instead of bricks and mortar, with understanding of Scripture instead of gold, with preaching instead of silver, and with the Holy Spirit instead of painted coverings, as St Martin himself would have done.[33]

The introduction of the *vita* first highlights Paul as an "apostolic predecessor" of Boniface,[34] a theme which the author develops further, making more explicit what had been largely implicit in the Boniface correspondence and in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*: that Boniface was to be seen as a new Paul.[35] The

30 *VaB*, c. 10, 69; cf. 1 Samuel 17:40–51.

31 For an extensive discussion of the comparison of Boniface to David in the *Vita altera*, see Broome, "Approaches to Community," 214–20.

32 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 356; *VaB*, c. 3, 64.

33 *VaB*, c. 4, 64.

34 Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 104.

35 Kehl, *Kult*, 145; for more on the development of the comparison between Boniface and Paul in Willibald's text, see the previous essay in this collection.

most sustained comparison of Boniface to the Apostle occurs in the scene where Boniface learns of the death of Willibrord and determines to journey to Frisia in order to "preach to the ends of the oceans" ("esse quasdam gentes in littore occeani sitas"), and to seek out the martyrdom he expected to encounter there.[36] Somewhat curiously, the author compares Boniface's journey to the Frisian island of Ostrikhe on the way to Dokkum with St Paul's journey to Miletus on the way to his martyrdom, stating that while Paul was welcomed, Boniface was "opposed with slander and persecution" ("iste a Fresonibus contumeliis et terroribus lacessitus").[37] Stranger still is the Utrecht priest's association of the beheading of Boniface with Paul being bitten by a viper. As Richard Broome notes, the author was more concerned with the "spiritual comparison between the two saints" than with logical consistency.[38] The closing lines of this scene of the *Vita altera* bear this out by emphasizing the parallel virtues and deeds of Boniface and his apostolic predecessor and showing how Boniface moved from being a disciple of Paul in life to joining him as a saint in the afterlife.[39]

The *Vita altera Bonifatii* frames all of Boniface's activities in the context of his martyrdom by emphasizing or foreshadowing the event at key moments.[40] Indeed, James Palmer describes the entire narrative as a "relentless march toward June 5, 754 and the creation of a new martyr."[41] Whereas Willibald portrays Boniface as eager to undertake a journey of *peregrinatio* and to preach and spread the Gospel to the peoples of Germania, the Utrecht priest describes Boniface as departing from England to seek a place where he might be given in sacrifice to the Lord, and arriving in Germania in the hopes of experiencing martrydom there.[42] To further reinforce this aspect of his sanctity, the text repeatedly refers to Boniface as "holy martyr," and presages his final voyage to Frisia with a vision of his death.

Such a depiction makes sense in the context of the Utrecht origins of the *Vita altera*: the site of Boniface's death at Dokkum occupied a central place in the Frisian veneration of the saint.[43] However, for all the heavy emphasis on

36 *VaB*, c. 14, 72.
37 *VaB*, c. 14, 72.
38 Broome, "Approaches to Community," 215.
39 *VaB*, c. 14, 72–73.
40 Broome, "Approaches to Community," 215.
41 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World*, 58.
42 *VaB*, c. 7, 67: "…ut exirit de terra nativitatis sue et properaret ad locum, in quo immolari Domino potuisset"; *VaB*, c. 8, 67: "Audito autem, quod Germanorum plurima multitudo sine Deo esset, illuc letabundus divertit, sperans se in hiis regionibus martirem fieri posse."
43 Kehl, *Kult*, 144.

martyrdom, the *Vita altera* shows remarkably little interest in promoting the cult of Boniface. It does not recount much about the fate of Boniface's remains after his death, or discuss the relics of Boniface or his companions which were housed in Utrecht.[44] Furthermore, the first fifteen chapters, which constitute the narrative core of the *Vita altera*, provide only the sketchiest account of Boniface's death, and include no mention of miracles performed by the saint. This was to prove unsatisfactory for the original audience of the *Vita altera*, the monks of St Martin's, who complained to the author and accused him of withholding information by refusing to recount the miracles performed by Boniface.[45] The Utrecht priest then added several chapters (Chapters 16–23) which responded to (as well as rebuked) the monks' complaints and gave them more of the details and miracle stories they desired.

It is in this section (Chapter 16) that the author recounts the famous story of the old woman who claimed to have witnessed the martyrdom and saw Boniface shield himself with a Gospel book. The image of Boniface raising a book overhead as he received his deathblow has become a potent element in the saint's iconographic representation.[46] Yet it is difficult to substantiate the claim made by the Utrecht priest that he actually interviewed an eye-witness who saw the martrydom take place in this way. It is certainly possible that he did. But as Marc-Aeilko Aris reminds us, the eyewitness report is also a hagiographic trope, and, more importantly, the image presented in the scene fits very neatly into a pattern of biblical imagery and allusion woven throughout the *vita*.[47] From the start of the *Vita altera*, the author uses martial imagery to portray Boniface as the "spiritual warrior," recalling at every turn Paul's metaphors from Ephesians 6:13–17: the "armour of God," the "shield of faith," and the "helmet of salvation."[48] The scene of Boniface's martyrdom as reported in the *Vita altera* makes concrete what is figured in Paul's words: Boniface's "helmet of salvation" is literally the Word of God.[49] True or not, this interpretation of events fits well with the stylized narrative of Boniface's life presented in the

44 Wood, *Missionary Life*, 106.

45 *VaB*, c. 18, 74–75.

46 Marc-Aeilko Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben: Der Tod der Bonifatius in Spiegel der Bonifatiusviten," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Petersberg: 2004), 112.

47 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 122.

48 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 122.

49 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 122, also suggests that this representation of Boniface's martyrdom may be influenced by an early liturgical ritual for the consecration of bishops practiced in southern Gaul and in Rome wherein two bishops or deacons hold a beaten Gospel book over the head and neck of the episcopal candidate.

Vita altera, and it continues to develop as a literary and iconographic trope down to the present.

In the remainder of the *Vita altera*, the author addresses his audience's complaints about the lack of miracles in the text. Indeed, the author seems to have avoided any mention of wonders in the *Vita* proper. While he ultimately does report some rather vague miracles of Boniface, the author first lashes out at his detractors calling them "foul-eating people" (*fagolidori*) and accusing them of "barking" and "raging" at him.[50] Wolfert Van Egmond has shown that the author's lack of interest in miracle stories seems to stem from his conntections to Utrecht: "all hagiography written in Utrecht during this period is heavily influenced by a reticence vis a vis miracles. Even the oldest text written in this region, the *Vita Gregorii* of Liudger … contains no miracle stories."[51] This reticence towards miracle stories may go back to the teachings of Gregory the Great, who argued that miracles were not, in themselves, important as signs of holiness.[52] The author of the *Vita altera* grudgingly includes miracles in the end, but he also argues that in their preoccupation with outward signs and miracles the brothers failed to perceive the "true" and "inward" miracles of Boniface which he worked through his preaching, pursuit of the apostolic life, and striving for martyrdom. The author concedes that Boniface may have healed men's physical maladies – he provides a long list of illnesses cured by the saint – but for him, Boniface was really a "physician of the soul."[53]

The only other references to miracles in the *Vita altera* have to do with Boniface's blessings upon and veneration in the various places with which he was most closely associated. The Utrecht priest repeats Willibald's account of the miraculous freshwater spring which emanated from the site of the martyrdom at Dokkum where a church in honor of the martyrs was later raised.[54] The author also mentions that the signs of the martyrdom as well as healings and wondrous deeds brought about through Boniface's intercession are visible to this day in the "four happy places, in Dokkum, Utrecht, Mainz, and the monastery of Fulda" where Boniface had been most active in life and where he was

50 *VaB*, c. 18, 74: "Hec dum stili officio assignata et in libellum digesta, rogantibus fratribus, publice recitarem, tamquam ex Trinacria emergentes astiterunt michi quidam inpuri, immo ut dicitur fagolidori homines, qui in Christi martirem quippiam se audere dissimulantes, in me autem canino ore sevientes, ita oblatrare ceperunt."

51 Van Egmond, "Misgivings about Miracles," 75.

52 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 358.

53 *VaB*, c. 20, 76.

54 *VaB*, c. 16, 73; cp. *VB*, c. 9, 56–57.

still venerated by a faithful flock.[55] In this way, the author of the *Vita altera* looks out beyond Utrecht and Dokkum to portray Boniface as a saint who unifies these places by continuing to inspire faith and spiritual healing.

3 The *Vita tertia Bonifatii*

The *Vita tertia Bonifatii* draws upon the *Vita altera Bonifatii* and is likewise part of the Utrecht group of Bonifatian lives.[56] It appears to have been written at Utrecht by an unknown author sometime after the death of Radbod, probably between 917 and 1075. The work abridges Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, but it also adds in material from other *vitae*, including Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, Hucbald's *Vita Lebwini*,[57] and the *Vita altera Bonifatii*.[58] The *Vita tertia* does not add much that is new to the story of Boniface's life beyond what the author found in his sources.

Overall, the *Vita tertia* follows Willibald's *vita* in focusing on Boniface as a missionary,[59] but includes a secondary emphasis on Boniface as a martyr that is indicative of the Utrecht tradition. As in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the Holy Spirit warns Boniface of his impending martyrdom, spurring Boniface to prepare for the end of his life by summoning and organizing his companions for their final preaching journey to Dokkum, where they expect to encounter violent resistance and deadly hostility. In the *Vita tertia*, Boniface not only emboldens his companions to face their Frisian attackers by trusting in God's grace, but he openly provokes the pagans until he and his companions are killed.[60] As Kehl points out, the author of the *Vita tertia* portrays Boniface's martyrdom as an outward-looking, self-conscious act and as a glorious and voluntary sacrifice, the goal of his saintly life.[61] However, the *Vita tertia*'s emphasis on martyrdom is concentrated primarily at the end of the text; it is not a leitmotif as it is in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. Furthermore, as Marc-Aeilko Aris

55 *VaB*, c. 17, 74: "In quattuor ergo felicissimis locis, id est Dockinga, Traiecto, in Moguntia urbe, in Fuldensi cenobio."

56 The standard edition is *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 79–89.

57 It is the author's use of the *Vita Lebwini* that provides the *terminus a quo* of 917. The *terminus ad quem* of 1075 is inferred from the fact that Adam of Bremen used the *Vita tertia* as a source for his history of the church of Hamburg-Bremen; see Levison, "Praefatio," lvi-lviii.

58 Kehl, *Kult*, 146–47.

59 See *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, c. 4, 82, for example.

60 *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, c. 10.

61 Kehl, *Kult*, 148.

has noted, the *Vita tertia* fails to develop the symbolic potential of the Gospel book as shield in the scene of Boniface's death, despite having used the *Vita altera* as a source.[62] Aris compares the depiction of Boniface's death in the *Vita tertia* to miniatures from the Fulda Sacramentary, noting that in these images as well Boniface merely holds the book by his side as his enemies attack, rather than using it to shield his head, which suggests that the book is only present to evoke the concept of Boniface and his companions as preachers.[63] The author omits many of the heavenly visions found in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, simplifying and streamlining the narrative. The *Vita tertia* pays virtually no attention to Boniface's early life or activities as a monk, bishop, or reformer;[64] in this it differs markedly from both Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and from the Mainz-based *Vita quarta* which followed it.

4 The *Vita quarta Bonifatii*

The *Vita quarta Bonifatii* was written at Mainz in the 11th century, and contains much historical material relating to Mainz and Boniface's episcopacy.[65] It can be dated to between 1011, after the death of Archbishop Willigis of Mainz who is referred to as *beatae memoriae pater*, and 1066, which is when the *Vita quarta* was used as a source by Otloh of St Emmeram in his *Vita Bonifatii*. A more precise dating may be between 1011 and 1025, since Burchard of Worms seems to have still been alive at the time when the *Vita quarta* was written.[66] The text is anonymous, but the author was likely someone who was living in and very well-informed about the diocese of Mainz and its history. Stephanie Haarländer has suggested that he may have been a canon at St Victor's,[67] though possibly not a native of Mainz, since Levison noted that the *Vita quarta* offers an outsider's perspective.[68] The *Vita quarta* appears to have been written as a kind of addendum to Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, providing several new anecdotes and adding more specific details to material left out or only briefly mentioned by

62 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 124.
63 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 124.
64 Kehl, *Kult*, 147.
65 The standard edition is *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 90–106. There is a German translation by Stephanie Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 240–49.
66 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 355; Levison, "Praefatio," lviii-lxii.
67 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 250. Chapter 13 of the *Vita quarta* discusses the foundation of the church of St Victor in Mainz and the establishment of canons therein.
68 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 251, note 41.

Willibald.[69] The *Vita quarta* circulated with Willibald's text in the manuscript tradition, and continued to be treated as an addition to the *Vita Bonifatii* in early printed editions.[70]

The *Vita quarta* focuses above all on Boniface's career in Mainz, situating him in the context of previous bishops and showing how the saint brought dignity to the episcopal seat and advocated for the interests of Mainz with popes and Frankish leaders. The saint's missionary endeavors are always portrayed as extensions of his office as bishop, and his martyrdom receives less attention here than in other *vitae*.[71] The *Vita quarta* begins with the story of how Boniface's predecessors as bishop, Gerold and his son Gewilib, violated their sacred office by taking part in battles against the Saxons with Charles Martel and his nobles. In the course of preaching and baptizing the peoples of the Rhineland, Boniface arrives in Mainz. Upon hearing that Gewilib participated in blood-feud by cutting down his father's Saxon killer in battle, Boniface petitions Charles Martel to depose him, calling the bishop to account for his violent act of vengeance. Gewilib ultimately steps down, and Boniface becomes bishop of Mainz, and journeys to Rome to be consecrated. The image of Boniface as the "watchful shepherd" permeates this first episode of the *Vita quarta*: when he arrives in Mainz, he is described as the wise shepherd setting wayward sheep back on the path to righteousness,[72] and at the end of the chapter the vigilant Boniface protects the flock of God and the church from the "wolf of heretical confusion."[73]

While the account is punctuated here and there by miracle stories,[74] the bulk of the *Vita quarta* focuses on episodes that show Boniface as pastor, organizer, and defender of righteousness and the rights of Mainz. In Chapter 2, he battles and defeats the "false prophet" Aldebert, saving Charles Martel from falling under his sway. Chapter 3 presents Boniface caring for the needs of his flock by inviting women such as Thecla and Leoba from England to join him in Thuringia, establishing the monasteries of Kitzingen and Tauberbishofsheim

69 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 239; Kehl, *Kult*, 132; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 17.

70 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 239.

71 Kehl, *Kult*, 132.

72 *Vita quarta*, c. 1, 92: "… caute ut prudens prospiciens pastor, qua parte errantes quaque recto itinere gradientes conspiceret oves…"

73 *Vita quarta*, c. 1, 93: "Quos ille libenter susceptos adiutores sibi quasi adoptivos filios enutrivit secumque gregis Dei cautos fecit esse pastores, ne aliunde quam per ostium ovium hereticae tortitudinis lupi catholicam ingrederentur ęcclesiam."

74 See *Vita quarta*, c. 5, wherein Boniface and his companions are visited by an angel and later given sustenance on a journey via a great bird from heaven, and c. 10–12, which recount some posthumous miracles of Boniface.

as centers where future priests and bishops would receive their Christian education. Chapter 4 recounts Boniface's role in organizing the church and establishing Willibald as bishop of Eichstätt and Burchard as bishop of Würzburg. In Chapter 6, Boniface curses oath-breakers who plot to deprive the church of St Martin in Mainz of a rightful inheritance, and Chapter 7 shows Boniface carefully and thoughtfully preparing for the future by having Lull consecrated as a bishop of Mainz before going to Frisia. The *Vita quarta* emphasizes that Boniface's last journey to Frisia was undertaken with the full support of everyone, including the pope, Pippin, and all the bishops, abbots, canons, monks, and indeed, all the Christians in the diocese of Mainz.[75] Perhaps this was in response to criticism that saw Boniface's decision to go to Frisia as an abandonment of his flock or a vainglorious attempt to seek out martyrdom.[76]

The *Vita quarta* truncates the account of Boniface's martyrdom, recounting the event itself with relative brevity and surrounding it with miraculous occurrences. A vision of heavenly light upon Boniface's tent presages the martyrdom, a miracle that seems to be influenced by Gregory the Great's story of the death of Benedict of Nursia.[77] Boniface forbids his companions from fighting back when they are attacked by the Frisians, whom the text refers to simply as "enemies" (*adversarii*, *contrarii*).[78] The account in the *Vita quarta* lingers more on posthumous miracles that take place during the preparation and transport of Boniface's body to its final resting place. Chapter 10 recounts a story about Boniface's wounds flowing with fresh blood when his corpse was being washed for burial. Lull collected the blood mixed with the water and buried it where the church of St Boniface stood in Mainz. There the martyr's clothes were kept as precious relics along with the remains of the other martyrs in St Albans. The author briefly alludes to the struggle to control Boniface's body, saying that Lull and his monks "took the holy body by force" ("et cum vi sanctum corpus abstulerunt") from Utrecht to Mainz, and later, that the saint appeared in a vision to a deacon named Otperht, commanding that Lull honor his promise to inter him in his desired resting place at Fulda.[79]

75 *Vita quarta*, c. 7, 98: "Novissime autem precepto Romani pontificis et consilio venerandi principis Pippini et synodalis auctoritatis licentia et omnium episcoporum et abbatum necnon canonicorum et monachorum omniumque christianorum ad suam diocesim pertinentium profectus est."

76 See Wood, *Missionary Life*, 88, for a discussion of Alcuin's implicit criticism of the overemphasis of Boniface's martyrdom in the Fulda tradition.

77 Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz," 257, note 9.

78 *Vita quarta*, c. 9, 100–01.

79 *Vita quarta*, c. 10, 101.

5 *Vita quinta Bonifatii*

The 11th-century *Vita quinta Bonifatii* is an abbreviation of Willibald's *Vita Boni-fatii* with a few additions from Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, the *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*, and the *Vita Pirminii*.[80] The text originated in southern Germany, and its circulation appears to have been limited to southern German libraries.[81] It contains little material other than a few miracle stories. Chapter 11 recounts the transport of Boniface's body from Mainz to Fulda, where the body was miraculously lightened as the people walked in procession up and down the Rhein in honor of the saint. Chapter 12 recounts a marvelous catch of fish by Ritant, a monk of Fulda, when Boniface's body was being carried across a bridge, and this, the narrator tells us, was the first of many miracles ascribed to Boniface at Fulda.[82] Otherwise the text is largely derivative.[83] The *Vita quinta Bonifatii* primarily serves as a witness to the continued interest in Boniface as a saint in this region.

6 Otloh of St Emmeram's *Vita Bonifatii* or *Vita sexta Bonifatii*

The latest and lengthiest of the medieval lives of Boniface is Otloh of St Emmeram's *Vita Bonifatii*, also known as the *Vita sexta Bonifatii*.[84] Otloh's account was written at Fulda at the behest of the abbot and monks between 1062 and 1066. The *Vita sexta* is especially notable for Otloh's use and inclusion of letters from the Boniface correspondence to add detail and authenticity to the hagiographic account of the saint. In this way, Otloh's text is informed both by Fulda's memory of its founder and by the historical sources of the Mainz tradition.

By the mid-11th century, the Aldhelmian Latin of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* must have seemed foreign to the monks at Fulda, who complained to Otloh of their difficulty in comprehending the "manifold dark passages" in the life of their founder.[85] According to Otloh's preface, his *Vita* was intended to be a reworking of Willibald's text, but it became much more. Otloh was an

80 The standard edition is *Vita quinta Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 107–10.

81 Levison, "Praefatio," lxii; Kehl, *Kult*, 200.

82 *Vita quarta,* c. 12, 104–06.

83 Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil*, 17.

84 The standard edition of the Latin text is *Vita Bonifatii auctore Otloho*, ed. W. Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 111–217.

85 Otloh, *VB*, Prologus, 112.

accomplished Latin writer and theologian when he came to Fulda in 1062,[86] after being exiled from his home monastery following a conflict with Otto, the bishop of Regensburg (1036–1060), concerning property rights to monastic lands.[87] Fulda, too, had become embroiled in conflict in recent years, when a succession of bishops from Würzburg and Mainz began to question its rights and privileges.[88] The idea of rewriting Willibald's *vita* had first been entertained ten years prior to Otloh's arrival, when Fulda was in the midst of a conflict between its abbot, Egbert, and Bishop Adalbero of Würzburg. Egbert reorganized the monastery's archives to locate documents necessary to defend Fulda's ancient privileges and prepared a dossier composed of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and a manuscript of the Boniface correspondence to send to Rome, in the hope that Pope Leo IX might wish to compose his own life of Boniface.[89] Pope Leo died before he could carry out Egbert's wish. When Otloh arrived, Fulda was yet again involved in a dispute, this time between Abbot Widerad of Fulda and Bishop Hezil of Hildesheim. This dispute resulted in Fulda's loss of favour and reputation at court, and led to open hostility between the Fulda monks and Abbot Widerad.[90] These circumstances are integral to an appreciation of Otloh's work in the *Vita sexta*, since Egbert's efforts to organize the monastic archives at Fulda facilitated the detailed research into the letters and historical sources for Boniface's life that shaped Otloh's text. Otloh's

86 Although Otloh of St Emmeram is best known for his autobiographical and visionary works the *Liber de tentationibus suis* and the *Liber visionum*, he also authored several sermons and theological treatises as well as several other saints' lives. For more information on Otloh and his other works, see Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, "Otloh von St Emmeram," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edition, eds. Kurt Ruh et al., vol. 11 (Berlin: 2004), 1116–152; Werner Goez, "Otloh von St Emmeram: Mönch, Kopist, Literat," in *Lebensbilder aus dem Mittelalter: Die Zeit der Ottonen, Salier, und Staufen*, ed. Goez Werner (Darmstadt: 1998), 168–177.

87 K.F. Morrison, "The Structure of Holiness in Othloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and Ebo's *Vita Ottonis*," in *Law, Church, and Society: Essays in honor of Stephan Kuttner*, eds. Kenneth Pennington and Robin Somerville (Philadelphia: 1977), 133.

88 On these events see Peter Josef Jörg, *Würzburg und Fulda: Rechtsverhältnis zwischen Bistum und Abtei bis zum 11. Jahrhundert*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg IV (Würzburg: 1951), 54–56, and Thomas Franke, "Studien zur Geschichte der Fuldaer Äbte im 11. und frühen 12. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Diplomatik* 33 (1987): 153–54.

89 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 135.

90 On this episode, known as the "Goslar Precedence Dispute," and its aftermath, see Tuomas Heikkilä, *Kloster Fulda und der Goslarer Rangstreit* (Helsinki: 1998); Hans-Peter Wehlt, "Reichsabtei und König, dargestellt am Beispiel der Abtei Lorsch mit Ausblicken auf Hersfeld, Stablo und Fulda," *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte* 28 (Göttingen: 1970), 292–93.

representation of Boniface, his episcopal career, his missionary activities, his relationships with popes and secular rulers, and his foundation and endowment of Fulda provide an indirect commentary on the events of Otloh's day and show that he was working, at least in part, to further the cause of Fulda and restore the monastery's reputation.[91]

Otloh largely derived his image of Boniface from Willibald's text, but greatly expanded it using information gleaned from historical and hagiographical sources to make an argument for the national significance of the saint. Otloh drew on material from the *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, for example in his detailed discussions of the deposition of Gewilib and the elevation of Boniface as Bishop of Mainz, using this story as a means of reminding the current bishop of his debt to the saint and of the close relationship between the papacy, and Boniface, and by extension, Fulda.[92] Otloh also appears to have been familiar with Eigil's *Vita Sturmi*, although he omits mention of the well-known quarrels between Lull and Sturm so as to present an image of unity that reinforced Fulda's position.[93] Most significant, however, was Otloh's use and inclusion of thirty letters, all correctly copied from two manuscripts – the Munich Codex (Cod. lat. Monacensis 8112), and the Karlsruhe codex (Cod. Carlsruhensis, Rastatt 22) – and put into chronological order.[94] In his preface Otloh discusses his rationale for including the letters, stating that they show the effort behind Boniface's great work to convert "Germania" to Christian belief, and to protect it not only from heathens and heretics, but from false Christians and wicked priests. Otloh saw that those letters which were sent to Boniface revealed more clearly than any other source the importance of Boniface to his contemporaries, and the high esteem in which he was held by the popes in Rome and the Frankish rulers Pippin and Carloman.[95] For this reason, twenty-five of the thirty letters he includes are from the papal curia and have to do with the organization of the German church.[96] Of the remaining five, two are from the Frankish mayors of the palace, one being Carloman's edict from the Concilium Germanicum and the other, a falsified grant of land to Fulda supposed to have been written by Pippin.[97] The remaining three letters are from Boniface himself, but of these, one is the record of a synod.[98] Otloh explicitly states that he chose to omit the

91 Kehl, *Kult*, 114–15.
92 Otloh, *VB*, lib. I, cc. 41–43, 155–57; Kehl, *Kult*, 117.
93 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 136.
94 Kehl, *Kult*, 114.
95 Otloh, *VB*, Prologus, 113.
96 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 135.
97 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 135.
98 Tangl, no. 59, quoted in Otloh, *VB*, lib. II, c. 4, 169–78.

letters exchanged between Boniface and his English correspondents so as not to bore or confuse the readers with discussion of foreign topics that no longer pertain to them.[99] The principle behind Otloh's inclusion of the letters was therefore historical pragmatism rather than biographical realism: only those documents which explained Boniface's role in the establishment of the church in Germania and the defense and support of Fulda were deemed relevant.

In addition to addressing these practical concerns in the *vita*, Otloh profoundly developed Willibald's somewhat superficial comparison of Boniface to Paul. Otloh was already famed as a theologian when he came to Fulda, and he brings a theological perspective to bear on his representation of Boniface as a follower of the apostle. K.F. Morrison has argued that Otloh's conception of holiness in the *Vita sexta* was predicated on Pauline distinctions "between appearance and reality – in terms of the visible and the invisible, the flesh and the spirit, the animal and the spiritual … man's outer existence and his inner life … true and false knowledge."[100] Taking cues from the Pauline language of duality already present in the letters, Otloh develops Boniface into an idealized example of apostolic holiness from the past whose every action pointed toward spiritual reality and eternal truth, contrasted with the worldliness and lassitude Otloh perceived in his present day. Otloh's inclusion of letters enables him to hold Boniface up not only as an example but as a dire warning, particularly to those bishops, who, in their unrepentant avarice, failed to live up to the legacy of their illustrious predecessor.[101]

This way of thinking also allowed Otloh to answer the concerns of those who lamented the lack of miracles at the shrine of Boniface in recent times. Miracles had ceased at Boniface's shrine, Otloh claimed, because of the "infidelity expressed in the negligence of the divine service, in the incorrigible malice of the inhabitants of the land, [and] in the ingratitude of those who, when miracles came to pass through the intercession of the saints, rendered neither appropriate praise nor thanks to God and His saints for them, nor even kept them in remembrance," not through any fault in Boniface's powers of intercession.[102] Otloh took pains to seek out stories of miracles from the *Vita quarta*

99 Otloh, *VB*, lib. 1, c. 44, 157.

100 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 138.

101 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 138; see, for example, Otloh, *VB*, Prologus, 114; lib. 1, c. 39, 154; lib. 1, c. 44, 157–58.

102 Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 138; Otloh, *VB*, lib. 2, c. 32, 215–16: "Cessant etiam interdum miracula, tam pro servitutis divinae neglegentia quam incorrigibili inhabitantium malitia; cessant et idcirco, quia, cum aliquando per intercessionem sanctorum eveniunt, non solum laudes vel grates debitae Deo sanctisque euis minime referuntur, sed nec memoriae commendantur."

and elsewhere to demonstrate the spiritual grace and sanctity of Boniface[103] and to argue that a return to righteousness and fidelity among the living would enable the powers of God working through his saint to be made manifest at the tomb of Boniface in Fulda once more. Otloh further appears to encourage the development of a Fulda-based cult of Boniface by promoting the monastery's possession of an important relic: his *Vita Bonifatii* is the first extant written work to explicitly link the Gospel book mentioned in the martyrdom scene in the *Vita altera* with a battered and slashed book then at Fulda.[104] In doing so, he transformed what was primarily a symbolic literary image in the *Vita altera* into a contact relic with apotropaic qualities, a physical object which could be visited by the faithful seeking contact and intercession with Saint Boniface.[105] Otloh emphasizes the miraculous properties of this codex when he reports that although the outside cover of the manuscript was badly mangled by the sword blows it incurred in Boniface's last moments of life, the inside of the codex was surprisingly unscathed: not a single letter was supposed to have been damaged.[106]

In Book 2, Otloh outlines how Boniface's career followed a model that was passed down to him through apostolic succession and what Palmer might call his saintly "lineage":[107] from Peter and Paul and the other apostles to the popes, from Pope Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury (perhaps echoing Cuthbert's words in his letter to Lull).[108] Explicitly comparing Boniface to Paul as the "Apostle to the Gentiles" and to Abraham as the father of all those who believe in Christ, Otloh describes how Boniface moved from his initial calling to the monastic life to priesthood, prelacy, and martyrdom, and eventually to his status as a patron saint and what Otloh calls "omnium incolarum Germaniae pater," or "spiritual father of all the inhabitants of Germania."[109] This was a new and powerful assertion; only Hrabanus Maurus had come close to making this kind of claim for Boniface when he called him the *patronus* of Germania, but even then he was speaking of the land and not necessarily its inhabitants.[110]

103 Kehl, *Kult*, 119; Morrison, "Structure of Holiness," 138–42.

104 According to Lutz E. von Padberg, *Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung: Zur Geschichte des Codex Ragyndrudis und der Fuldaer Reliquien des Bonifatius* (Frankfurt-am-Main: 1996), 29–30, the codex referred to by Otloh is not the same as the Codex Ragyndrudis, but is rather a lost Gospel manuscript which was not as badly damaged as the Codex Ragyndrudis.

105 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 125.

106 Aris, "Erzähltes Sterben," 125.

107 Palmer, "Hagiography and Time," 103–06.

108 Tangl, no. 111.

109 Otloh, *VB*, lib. 1, c. 44, 158.

110 Kehl, *Kult*, 119.

Rather than portraying Boniface's missionary activities as being divided among the various and disparate peoples of the Hessians, Thuringians, Frisians, and Saxons, Otloh repeatedly appeals to a unified vision of the Germanic "spiritual sons of Boniface," encouraging them in their devotion to the saint and to emulate the holy example of the father who brought them to the faith.[111]

7 *Vitae Bonifatii* – Lost and Found

A final word may be said here about those medieval "lives" of Boniface which may once have existed but are now lost to us, and those which still exist, but in forms other than a conventional written narrative. The stories of these lost and found *vitae* are embedded in the history of the monastic library at Fulda. We begin with a lost *vita*. It has long seemed strange that despite Fulda's otherwise extensive production of saints' lives in the 9th century, the community there did not produce a dedicated life of their famous patron saint and founder until Otloh's 11th-century work.[112] Eigil's *Vita Sturmi* (written 794–800) has sometimes been regarded as a *Doppelbiographie* of both Boniface and Sturm, but although Boniface plays a major role in this text, the account is ultimately focused on Sturm and the early days of Fulda. We know from Otloh's preface that the monks at Fulda had long since found Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* obscure and tedious to read, quite aside from its noticeable anti-Fulda bias.[113] Why, when monks of Fulda such as Brun Candidus and others were so busy composing eloquent *vitae* in praise of other saints,[114] would they neglect their own? There is evidence to suggest that perhaps they did not.

In a catalogue from the former library of Fulda dated to the 15th century (now held in the university library of Basel), Gangolf Schrimpf discovered an entry that lists a "Vita sancti Bonifacii metrice et prosaice conscripta" among the hagiographic items in Fulda's collection. This entry, if it is to be believed, suggests the prior existence of a hitherto unknown *Opus geminum,* since it

111 Otloh, *VB*, lib. I, c. 44, 158.

112 Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild und Architektur als Träger einer ekklesiologischen Konzeption von Klostergeschichte: Die karolingische Vita Aegil des Brun Candidus von Fulda (ca. 840)," in *Hagiographie und Kunst: der Heiligenkult in Schrift, Bild und Architektur*, ed. G. Kerrscher (Berlin: 1993), 95.

113 Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild," 95; Petra Kehl, "Auf den Spuren zweier verschwollener *vitae Bonifatii* aus Fulda," *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 68 (1992), 104.

114 Kehl, "Auf den Spuren," 104.

could not refer to any of the known lives of Boniface.[115] As Gereon Becht-Jördens notes, a twinned verse and prose *vita* of Boniface that appears uniquely in a library catalog from Fulda would almost certainly be the product of the Fulda school of hagiography.[116]

However, because the manuscript appears to have been lost, we can only speculate about when the text was written and who wrote it. Becht-Jördens proposes that the hagiographic account was written around 819 during the abbacy of Ratger as a "monumental work" to coincide with the translation of Boniface's relics into Ratger's newly-built basilica at Fulda, as a "literary equivalent of the Basilica."[117] Janneke Raaijmakers, on the other hand, argues for a later date, during the abbacy of Hrabanaus Maurus, as the *opus geminum* may have been part of Hrabanus's plan to bolster the cult of Boniface through the production of literary texts in honor of the saint. This would also explain why this twinned *vita* was not referred to by Brun Candidus in his *Vita Aegili*.[118] What it does not explain is why Otloh does not mention the existence of this prose and verse *vita*, especially since he discusses his researches in the Fulda archives and library so extensively in the preface and text of his own *Vita Bonifatii*. Kehl points out that it is possible that Otloh felt this text was irrelevant to his work, as he was primarily focusing on rewriting Willibald's *vita* and incorporating the letters. The fact that Otloh does not mention an earlier double *vita* of Boniface need not mean he was unaware of it, or that it did not exist.[119]

The work listed as *Vita sancti Bonifacii metrice et prosaice conscripta* in the 15th-century Fulda catalogue is lost, but another medieval codex found in Fulda's library has much to tell us about the cult of Boniface as saint and martyr from the Middle Ages down to the present day: the Codex Ragyndrudis. Since the 11th century, the Ragyndrudis Codex, an 8th-century manuscript whose cover has been hacked and slashed by an axe or sword, has been regarded by the monks at Fulda and by devotees of St Boniface as the book which Boniface

115 Gangolf Schrimpf et al., *Mittelalterliche Bücherverzeichnisse des Klosters Fulda und andere Beiträge zur Geschichte der Bibliothek des Klosters Fulda im Mittelalter*, Fuldaer Studien 4 (Frankfurt-am-Main: 1992), 153; Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild," 95; Kehl, "Auf den Spuren," 106, all outline the second crucial but potentially dubious piece of evidence for the existence of this lost *vita Bonifatii*. A 1501 note in the *Chronicon Hirsaugiensis* written by an abbot of Hirsau, Johannes Trithemius, refers to a story about a monk named Ruthard who came from Hirsau to Fulda to study with Hrabanus Maurus and Walafrid Strabo (hence, in the 9th century) and while there wrote a "passionem sancti Bonifacii archiepiscopi heroico carmine pulcherrime in duobus libris."

116 Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild," 95.

117 Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild," 95.

118 See Raaijmakers' contribution to this volume, note 60.

119 Kehl, "Auf den Spuren," 106.

is reputed to have held over his head to defend himself against the blows of his murderers.[120] As we have seen above, the Utrecht author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* provides the earliest extent written account of the iconic scene of Boniface shielding himself with the Gospels, and Otloh of St Emmeram's *Vita Bonifatii* is the first source we have linking this book to a codex housed at Fulda. Still archived at Fulda as Codex Bonifatianus 2, the Codex Ragyndrudis has become something more than a medieval book with an extraordinary (if dubious) backstory, something more, even, than a holy contact relic: it has come to symbolize the life and death of Boniface himself. It has become, in the words of Michel Aaij, a "booklife."[121]

The Codex Ragyndrudis has been dated to between 720 and 730, and its contents were probably written at the monastery of Luxeuil or one of its close associates. The person behind the name "Ragyndrudis" inscribed on the last page of the manuscript cannot be identified. The Codex contains copies of Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma* and Ambrose of Milan's *De bono mortis*, as well as a miscellany of texts dealing in some way with the issue of heresy, primarily Arianism, such as the *Disputatio beati Cerealis episcopi Castellensis contra Maximinum Arriomanitam* and the *Epistula Agnelli episcopi Ravennatensis ad Arminium de ratione fidei*.[122] The contents of the manuscript are difficult to square with the story told in the *Vita altera Bonifatii* of Boniface shielding himself with a Gospel book. Scholars have attempted to explain this disconnect between material object and legendary story, some arguing that such a book would have been of practical use for Boniface as a reformer of the Church, whether or not he would have had to contend with actual Arianism in his daily work. It is possible that the cross motifs on the cover of the Codex Ragyndrudis caused it to be mistaken for a Gospel book by those who did not (or could not) examine its contents, or that the author of the *Vita altera* and Otloh simply chose to represent it as a Gospel book to heighten the symbolic resonances of the martyrdom scene. In any case, it is impossible to prove that Boniface owned the book, or that it was taken to Frisia by him. Even if we assume that this book was among those Boniface took with him to Dokkum, there is no way

120 The Codex Ragyndrudis has been discussed extensively by Lutz E. von Padberg in "Bonifatius und die Bücher," in *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*, eds. Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork (Paderborn: 1994); and *Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung: Zur Geschichte des Codex Ragyndrudis und der Fuldaer Reliquien des Bonifatius* (Frankfurt-am-Main: 1996).

121 Michel Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife: How the Codex Ragyndrudis became a *Vita Bonifatii*," *Heroic Age* 10 (2007), www.heroicage.org, §1.

122 Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife," §13.

TABLE 8.1 Boniface in medieval saints' lives[a]

Title and probable place of composition	Author, patron(s), and/or dedicatee(s)	Estimated Date of composition	Comments	Standard edition
Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo (*Vita I*) Place: Mainz	Author: Willibald of Mainz, a priest from Wessex Patrons (as stated in Prologue of *vita*): Lull, Archbishop of Mainz and Megingoz, Bishop of Würzburg	Between 754 (death of Boniface) and 768/769 (death of Megingoz)	Earliest life of Boniface; used as a source in all later *vitae*	*Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 1–58
Vita altera Bonifatii (*Vita II*) Place: Utrecht	Author: anonymous priest of St Martin's in Utrecht; later copied and possibly revised by Radbod, Bishop of Utrecht (899–917) Dedicatee: superscript in earliest manuscript, *Codex Gothanus*, says Radbod sent this *vita* to the Abbot of Fulda	First half of the 9th century; possibly revised by Radbod between ca. 900–917	First complete life of Boniface written after Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*	*Vita altera Bonifatii auctore Traiectensi*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 62–78
Vita tertia Bonifatii (*Vita III*) Place: Utrecht	Author: unknown	Probably between 917 and 1075	Largely an abridgement of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, but also adds in material from other *vitae*, including the *Vita altera*	*Vita tertia Bonifatii*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 79–89

Title and probable place of composition	Author, patron(s), and/or dedicatee(s)	Estimated Date of composition	Comments	Standard edition
			Bonifatii, Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, Hucbald's *Vita Lebwini*	
Vita quarta Bonifatii (*Vita IV*) Place: Mainz	Author: unknown	Between 1011 and 1066, possibly around 1020	Contains a good deal of material pertaining to Mainz, including some otherwise unattested or more fully elaborated material on Boniface	*Vita quarta Bonifatii auctore Moguntino*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 90–106
Vita quinta Bonifatii (*Vita V*) Place: Southern Germany	Author: unknown	Extant by the 11th century	Consists largely of excerpts of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, along with some material from Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* and the *Vita Priminii*	Excerpts edited in *Vita quinta Bonifatii*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 107–10
Vita Bonifatii auctore Otloho (*Vita VI*) Place: Fulda	Author: Otloh of St Emmeram Patrons: Monks of the Abbey of Fulda	Between 1062–1066	An extensive and lengthy rewriting of the life of Boniface, drawing on multiple sources. Otloh incorporates several letters	*Vita Bonifatii auctore Otloho*, in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), 111–217

TABLE 8.1 Boniface in medieval saints' lives[a] (*cont.*)

Title and probable place of composition	Author, patron(s), and/or dedicatee(s)	Estimated Date of composition	Comments	Standard edition
			from the Boniface Correspondence which he encountered in the archives at Fulda into the *vita*	
Vita germanuum Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi Place: Southern Germany (Heidenheim)	Author: Hygeburg of Heidenheim, an English nun at Heidenheim, kinswoman to Boniface as well as brothers Willibald and Wynnebald	Late 8th century, probably between 767–785	Earliest known piece of writing by an early medieval English woman, who names herself in the prologue of the *vita* using a cryptogram. A double hagiography of the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald, including an extensive account of their pilgrimages to Rome and the Holy Land (possibly based on Willibald's own report). Also includes substantial material about Boniface	Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *Vita Willibaldi episcopi Eichstetensis et vita Wynnebaldi abbatis Heidenheimensis auctore sanctimoniale Heidenheimensis*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), 80–117

Title and probable place of composition	Author, patron(s), and/or dedicatee(s)	Estimated Date of composition	Comments	Standard edition
Vita Gregorii abbatis Traiectensis Place: Utrecht	Author: Liudger	Around 800	The *vita* of Boniface's pupil Abbot Gregory of Utrecht; the first half focuses on Boniface himself	Luidger, *Vita Gregorii abbatis Traiectensis*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), 63–79
Vita Sturmi Place: Fulda	Author: Eigil Patron and Dedicatee: an unknown *virgo* named Angildruth, who has requested "a little book [about] the early days and life of Sturm" and "the foundation of the aforesaid monastery"	Between 794–800, during the abbacy of Bangulf at Fulda	The *vita* of Boniface's pupil, Abbot Sturm of Fulda; contains enough material about Boniface to be considered a double life of Boniface and Sturm	Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, ed. P. Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda: Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Veröffentlichung der Hist. Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 29 (Marburg: 1968)

a Information presented in this table is largely based on the introductory comments in Wilhelm Levison's edition of the *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG 57, *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii archepiscopo Moguntini* (Hanover: 1905), LVII–LXXXIV, supplemented with material from Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter* (*754–1200*) (Fulda: 1993), and Stephanie Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz: Überlieferung vom 8. bis 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Bonifatius im Mainz*, ed. Barbara Nichtweiß (Mainz: 2005), 66–67.

to confirm for certain that the book was slashed on the scene or that it is the one Boniface is reputed to have held.[123]

And yet, the association of this tortured book with Boniface and his martyrdom has proved firm and lasting, reinforced down through the centuries by the

123 Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife," §5–7. Nearly every aspect of the Codex Ragyndrudis itself and the story of Boniface shielding himself with a book is the subject of scholarly debate. For opposing readings, see von Padberg, *Studien zur Bonifatisverehrung*, 37–44; and Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Heiliger und Buch: Überlegungen zur Tradition des Bonifacius-Martyriums anläßlich der Teilfaksimilierung des Ragyndrudis-Codex," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für die Landesgeschichte* 46 (1996), 1–30.

saintly iconography of Boniface bearing a codex pierced by a sword[124] and by the presentation of the Codex as a relic.[125] Aaij argues that it is this association which matters most: as a symbol, the Codex Ragyndrudis has become a testament to Boniface's life and death as well as his memorialization and veneration in the Church and in the minds and hearts of the believing faithful.[126] The Codex Ragyndrudis, then, may be the best known of the medieval *vitae Bonifatii*, a text whose very material existence tells a story about Boniface's life and witnesses to his martrydom. As a relic and an indelible image, this battered book has circulated the idea of Boniface as saint more widely across space, time, and walks of life than our medieval Latin authors ever could.

124 For an overview of this iconography, see von Padberg, "Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung," 31–36; Gregor K. Stasch, "Bonifatius: Kult und Reliquien," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch, Vonderau Museum Fulda Kataloge 10 (Fulda: 2004), 32–50.

125 As Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife," §11, notes, the Codex Ragyndrudis "receives an almost metonymical connection with the martyr. For visitors at the Fulda Dommuseum, this is especially strong, since they see the battered outside of the book immediately after returning from the altar which displays the top of Boniface's skull."

126 Aaij, "Boniface's Booklife," § 22.

CHAPTER 9

Boniface: Preaching and Penance

Rob Meens

1 Introduction

Boniface was a man of action. He played a central role in mission, in organizing the church and in Frankish politics; he was a schoolteacher and a founder of monasteries. Yet, Boniface was also a priest and as such he must have been active in a pastoral role, though his pastoral activities are not nearly as richly documented as his more political ones. While he was was praised for his preaching qualities, it is difficult to establish exactly what his sermons may have looked like. As a priest and bishop, he probably heard confession and assigned penances for sinners, particularly since he was so driven by a desire for correction and discipline, but we have no clear indication how he may have acted in this way. This chapter will discuss a collection of sermons ascribed to Boniface and an 8th-century penitential, the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, which was composed in Corbie. Both can arguably be related to Boniface and thus may provide us with some insights into his preaching and how he may have dealt with sinners.[1]

2 Preaching

That preaching was important to Boniface is made clear in the famous letter to his mentor, bishop Daniel of Winchester, in which our missionary deplored the fact that he had to communicate with unworthy priests and clerics when at court, living a life that was contrary to what the canons taught. He felt obliged by his oath sworn at the grave of St Peter in Rome not to consort with such persons, but still had to interact with them to some extent in order not to jeopardize his preaching to the people.[2] He therefore was willing to cooperate with

1 This chapter covers similar ground as Rob Meens, "Aspekte der Christianisierung des Volkes," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 211–29, but includes a discussion of scholarly contributions that have since then been published.

2 Tangl, no. 63, 130; Emerton (repr. New York: 2000), no. 51, 92–93. For a discussion of this letter in context, see Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954), 235–36, and Lutz E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer*

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clerics he regarded as unworthy of their office, in order to be able to spread the Word. Furthermore, he solicited from Egbert of York exegetical works written by the Venerable Bede particularly because of their usefulness in preaching.[3] So there is no doubt that preaching was important to Boniface.

Boniface also received advice on the subject of preaching from Daniel, who gave detailed guidance on how to convince a pagan audience of the superiority of the Christian faith, or, in Daniel's words, how to "generate sons of Christ" by tilling the earth with the plough of preaching.[4] In his well-known letter from 723/724, Daniel set out a rhetorical strategy that should be successful when trying to convince a pagan audience. Since this is one of the few texts discussing preaching to a pagan audience, it merits some attention. Given Boniface's esteem for his mentor, we can imagine that he followed Daniel's advice, although some historians have regarded the approach advocated by Daniel as too theoretical to be useful.[5] Daniel's approach is twofold. First, he advises Boniface to criticize a polytheistic cosmology by questioning the origins of the gods as well as of the cosmos. As an example, he proposes that Boniface question the stories about gods begetting other gods. If this were so, then either there had to be an infinite number of gods, or they had to have stopped reproducing at some point. Both stances could be rationally criticized, Daniel suggests. The other part of the strategy regards the material rewards that pagans hoped to gain from their gods. The fact that Christians lived in better material conditions, inhabiting "lands rich in oil and wine and abounding in other sources," would suggest that pagan gods are no good. They can also be shown to be lacking in power, because they are unable to punish Christians when these destroy their shrines. Daniel moreover recommends discussing such matters with the pagans calmly and in a moderate way in order to avoid offending or angering them.[6] We do not know whether Boniface followed his mentor's advice. Certainly, chopping down sacred trees does not appear to conform to such a moderate approach, yet the strategy in itself does not seem implausible. It is remarkable that in his letter Daniel not only instructs Boniface to actually enter into a rational discussion with pagans, but that he also pays respect to pagan beliefs in talking explicitly about gods, where generally in Christian discourse

(Munich: 2003), 77–78. For Boniface's oath in which he promised to avoid contact with bishops who did not live according to ecclesiastical rules, see: Tangl, no. 16, 28–29.

3 Tangl, no. 91, 207.

4 Tangl, no. 23, 38–41.

5 For example, von Padberg, *Bonifatius*, 45.

6 Tangl, no. 23, 38–41; Emerton, no. 15, 26–28.

pagan gods were represented as demons. This may suggest that here Daniel drew on his own experience confronting paganism in Wessex.[7]

Boniface lived on in memory as a talented preacher, or at least that is how Willibald described his activities in this field:

> He burned with such a zeal for Scripture that he often with all effort tried to imitate and to hear it; and what was written for the education of the people, he himself revealed to them through preaching with admirable eloquence and strengthening it with an ingenious employment of parables. He owned such a moderation in discernment that the vigor of his correction did not lack clemency, nor did his clemency lack vigor of correction, but he whom the zeal of vigor stirred, the clemency of love tempered. He taught the same sacred discipline to the rich, the powerful, the free and the unfree and he did not soften the rich by flattery, nor did he press the unfree and the free through harshness.[8]

Willibald gives us a glimpse of the practice of preaching when he tells us that in England priests and clerics went to visit people in their homes in order to preach, a practice he describes as particular to "those regions."[9] It is unclear whether we can infer from this remark that such a practice remained limited to Boniface's homeland, or that Boniface and other English clerics clung to this way of preaching when working on the Continent.[10]

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7 As suggested by Barbara Yorke, *The Conversion of Britain: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain c. 600–800* (Harlow: 2006), 134, and John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 55–58.

8 Willibald, *VB*, c. 3, 12: "In tantum enim scripturarum exarsit desiderio, ut omni se intentione earum imitatione et auditione sepius coniungeret; et quae ob doctrinam populorum conscripta sunt, ipse quippe populis mira eloqui dissertitudine et sollertissima parabularum adsertione efficaciter praedicando retexuit. Cui tale discretionis temperamentum inerat, ut et vigore correptionis mansuetudo et vigor praedicationis mansuetudine non deerat, sed quem zelus accenderat vigoris, mansuetudo mitigabat amoris. Divitibus ergo ac potentibus liberisque ac servis aequalem sanctae exortationis exhibuit disciplinam, ut nec divites adolando demulceret nec servos vel liberos districtione praegravaret." (The translation in the text is my own.) For the way hagiographers presented Boniface as preacher, see Christoph Galle, "Bonifatius als Prediger: Zum Wandel des Predigtamtes und zur Entwicklung eines Predigerideals anhand hagiographischer Quellen des 8. bis. 11. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 97.1 (2015), 5–45.

9 Willibald, *VB*, c. 1, 5.

10 As implied by Lutz E. von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen: Theorie und Praxis der Missionspredigt im frühen Mittelalter*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 51 (Stuttgart: 2003), 194–95.

A number of texts can be related to Boniface's preaching activities, although the relations of these text to the missionary remain tenuous. I will briefly discuss them here because they give an impression of sermons used in a missionary context roughly in the region and period in which Boniface was active as a preacher. Two short sermons are found in a manuscript that can be closely related to Boniface himself, in a collection of miscellaneous religious and legal texts that Michael Glatthaar has named the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae*, in a manuscript now kept in the Vatican Library.[11] Although this manuscript was written in the late 8th century, it contains a wealth of material related to Boniface, a relation that can also be argued for the two sermons found in it.[12] The first of these is a short sermon titled "Alloquutio sacerdotum de coniugiis inlicitis ad plebem," which discusses several illicit sexual behaviours with an emphasis on incestuous relations.[13] It should possibly be seen in relation to the council of Estinnes, which forbade incestuous marriages.[14] The second sermon in the manuscript is even shorter. It is generally named "Rogamus vos" after the first two words of the text and deals with a topic that indicates an early stage in the process of conversion, since it responds to a criticism of the moment at which the Christian faith was preached. This sermon tried to address the complaint that because of the recent propagation of the Christian message, many thousands of men and women, including the family and ancestors of recent converts, will have perished without hope of salvation.[15] Such a question was probably rather urgent in an early phase of Christianization and we know that Boniface had to respond to views propounded by the Irish monk Clemens, who seems to have opened up the possibility of salvation for forefathers who had not been baptized.[16] These two sermons address specific issues that can be

11 Ms. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 577; see Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 17 (Frankfurt: 2004), 455–93.

12 See Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 484–90; the sermons were without convincing argumentation attributed to Augustine of Canterbury by their editor Machielsen, see L. Machielsen, "Fragments patristiques non identifiés du ms. Vat. Pal. 577," *Sacris Erudiri* 12 (1961), 504–05.

13 Edited in Machielsen, "Fragments patristiques," 533–35.

14 Karl Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung: Die Konstruktion eines Verbrechens (300–1100)* (Berlin, New York: 2008), 244–45. *Concilium Lifiniense*, ed. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2.1, c. 3, 7.

15 Edited as Sermo II in Machielsen, "Fragments patristiques," 535.

16 See Sven Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy of Clemens," *Church History* 80 (2011), 275–77; Rob Meens, "With one Foot in the Font: The Failed Baptism of the Frisian King Radbod and the Eighth Century Discussion about the Fate of Unbaptized Forefathers," in *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship. A Festschrift for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín*, eds. Pádraic Moran and Immo Warntjes (Turnhout: 2015), 584–85; Alban

related to Boniface because of their manuscript context and because of the particular topics that are being discussed.

Apart from these two sermons which can be closely linked to Boniface, there is another group of fifteen sermons that have a less secure connection to Boniface but have been edited as Bonifatian sermons. This link was first made in the 18th century by Edmond Martène and Ursinus Durand, who regarded them as genuine works composed by Boniface. They conceded that these sermons were written in a simple manner and did not always follow the rules of Latin grammar, but claimed that "Boniface instructed barbarian peoples and therefore he was sometimes forced to address them in a barbarian manner."[17] They edited them on the basis of a manuscript then in the possession of the royal chancellor Henri François d'Aguesseau, probably ms. Paris, BnF, lat. 10741, the earliest extant manuscript; it dates from the second half of the 9th century and contains 14 of the 15 sermons. Martène and Durand collated this manuscript with 10 sermons of a collection found in two other manuscripts identified by Jean Mabillon in the library of Queen Christina of Sweden that had by then entered the Vatican Library.[18] They added a 15th sermon that was preserved in a 9th-century manuscript from Melk under the name of Boniface, which had been edited by Bernhard Pez.[19] The collection of 15 sermons thus assembled was then reprinted by Migne in the *Patrologia Latina* among the works of Boniface, the edition which is most often used today and whose numbering is followed here and by other scholars.[20] Although the fifteenth sermon is similar to the other fourteen and closely resembles sermon 5, there is no manuscript evidence suggesting that it belonged to the same collection. The other fourteen are found only in the Paris manuscript as a complete set, but in another

Gautier, *Beowulf au paradis: Figures de bons païens dans l'Europe du Nord au haut Moyen Âge* (Paris: 2017), 177–78.

17 The collection was edited in Edmond Martène and Ursinus Durand, *Collectio amplissima veterum scriptorum et monumentorum*, vol. 9 (Paris: 1733), cols. 185–218; see the introduction on cols. 185–88: "Barbaros populos instruebat S. Bonifatius, quos etiam barbare alloqui quandoque cogebatur."

18 Now Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Reg. lat. 457 (dating from the 12th century) and 562 (16th century). A similar collection is also found in the 12th-century manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 340, fols. 53–64.

19 Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 597 (Q. 52); see Bernhard Pez, *Thesaurus anecdotorum nouissimus* 4.2 (Augsburg: 1723), 3–6; for four other manuscripts containing this sermon, see Gerhard Schmitz, "Bonifatius und Alkuin: Ein Beitrag zur Glaubensverkündigung in der Karolingerzeit," in *Alkuin von York und die geistige Grundlegung Europas. Akten der Tagung vom 30. September bis zum 2. Oktober 2004 in der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen*, eds. Ernst Tremp and Karl Schmuki (St. Gallen: 2010), 75.

20 *PL* 89, cols. 813–72.

mutilated manuscript from the 10th century, now divided in two parts, the first and the last sermons are included while the original table of contents indicates that the codex contained "sermons of the holy martyr Boniface for people and about baptism and other topics," which describes the whole series rather adequately.[21] So we have two manuscript witnesses to a collection of 14 sermons, three to a collection of 10, and a number of manuscripts containing singular sermons. Whether these were taken from the collection, or whether the compiler of the collection drew on existing sermons, still needs to be established.[22]

In the late 19th century a lively debate erupted among German scholars about the authorship of the sermons, fuelled by conceptions of the true nature of Christianity and ideas about the question of what mission entailed. In this discussion Bonifatian authorship was accepted by Cruel and Nürnberger and rejected by Müllenhoff and Scherer, and by Hahn. The argument revolved around the (alleged) missionary character of the sermons, their compatibility with themes addressed by Boniface in his councils and letters, and the level of linguistic skills evident in the sermons, sometimes regarded as being too basic for an eminent ecclesiastic personality such as Boniface.[23] Albert Hauck's rejection of their Bonifatian lineage carried the day for most scholars in the 20th century.[24] Consequently the sermons appear neither in Theodor Schieffer's highly influential study of the missionary that was published 1200 years after Boniface's martyrdom, nor are they discussed in the collection of articles published on the occasion of that anniversary; Reinhold Rau's 1968 collection of sources does not include them.[25] Jean-Paul Bouhot, who charted

21 Manuscript Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 214, fols. 119–120v and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MSS NAL 450, fol. 1r; for the table of contents, see fol. 1v of the Vatican manuscript: "Sermones sancti Bonifacii martiris ad populum et de babtismo et aliis rebus."

22 The most detailed analysis of the manuscript tradition is to be found in Jean-Paul Bouhot, "Alcuin et le 'De catechizandis rudibus' de Saint Augustin," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 15 (1980), 184–91.

23 Karl Müllenhoff and Wilhelm Scherer, *Denkmäler deutscher Poesie und Prosa aus dem VIII–XII Jahrhundert*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: 1873), 504–05; Rudolf Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt im Mittelalter* (Detmold: 1879, repr. Darmstadt: 1966), 13–28; Heinrich Hahn, "Die angeblichen Predigten des Bonifaz," *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 24 (1884), 584–625; August Josef Nürnberger, "Die angebliche Unechtheit der Predigten des heiligen Bonifatius," *Neues Archiv* 14 (1889), 111–34.

24 Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1958), 446, n. 3. For the effect of this judgment on later scholarship, see Schmitz, "Bonifatius und Alkuin," 73–74.

25 Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (they are not mentioned in the afterword added in the 1972 reprint from Darmstadt); *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* [*754–1954*] (Fulda: 1954); Reinhold Rau

their manuscript transmission, also denied Bonifatian authorship.[26] In two of Lutz E. von Padberg's biographies of Boniface from the late 20th century, the sermons were not discussed.[27] In his detailed study of missionary sermons published in 2003, however, von Padberg, regarding the issue of authorship as undecided, devoted ample attention to their contents, characterizing them as specimens of Carolingian catechetical instructions.[28]

The discussion of this pseudo-Boniface collection of 14 sermons has mostly centred on its relationship with the missionary and church reformer. The connections between the sermons and Boniface are tenuous, although individual sermons as well as some manuscripts containing them can be related to insular circles on the Continent. One manuscript containing sermon 11 is written in a Continental Anglo-Saxon hand, while another one was written in a hand that displays insular traces alongside a different part of the manuscript written in an insular hand. In one of these the Bonifatian sermon is found in an insular context of Irish sermons.[29] Some of the sermons contain themes that can be linked to insular sources.[30] Moreover, the earliest manuscripts were written in the Rhineland and Bavaria, both regions in which Boniface was

(ed.), *Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius: nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 4b (Darmstadt: 1968), 373–74.

26 Jean-Paul Bouhot, "Alcuin et le 'De catechizandibus rudibus,'" 191: "Aucun détail ne permet de rapporter ces prédications à un moment particulier du ministère de saint Boniface († 754) auprès des peuples de Germanie, ni même de tenir pour assuré qu'elles ont été adressées à des chrétiens récemment convertis et baptisés" ("No detail allows us to relate these preachings to a particular moment in the ministery of St Boniface to the peoples in Germania, nor to regard as certain that these were addressed to recently converted and baptized Christians").

27 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Wynfreth-Bonifatius* (Wuppertal: 1989), 124–38; Marco Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord* (Hilversum: 1999).

28 von Padberg, *Die Inszenierung religiöser Konfrontationen*, 195–202. Von Padberg based his views on a then still unpublished study of the texts, that later appeared as Rob Meens, "Christianization and the Spoken Word: The Sermons Attributed to St. Boniface," in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik,* eds. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (Vienna: 2010), 211–22. For a Dutch translation of these sermons, see Auke Jelsma, trans., *Het Leven als Leerschool: Preken van Bonifatius* (Laren: 2003).

29 It concerns Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 212 and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 220; see the detailed descriptions at http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/digi-pdf-katalogisate/sammlung52/werk/pdf/bav_pal_lat_212.pdf and http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/digi-pdf-katalogisate/sammlung51/werk/pdf/bav_pal_lat_220.pdf.

30 Meens, "Christianization and the Spoken Word," 215–16.

active.[31] The 14 pseudo-Bonifatian sermons as a whole show clear parallels with Chapter 80 of the *Admonitio Generalis*, the programmatic capitulary that Charlemagne issued in the year 789 in which he formulated the main goals of the reform program. In this long chapter Charlemagne and his advisers, among whom Alcuin must have been prominent, formulated the main themes for preaching, dictating that priests being established in the dioceses should only preach useful, honest, and rightful things, and those things that will lead to eternal life.[32] The themes addressed in the *Admonitio Generalis*, including the Trinity, the Creation, the Incarnation, the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Last Judgment, are all addressed in this collection. The first sermon, for example, "De fide recta," is mostly an exposition of the creed and explains the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.[33] The second sermon, "De origine humanae conditionis," relates how God created Adam and Eve and continues to speak about their fall from paradise, as well as the Incarnation.[34] The Day of Judgment is addressed in almost all of the sermons. Likewise, both the *Admonitio* and the pseudo-Bonifatian collection of sermons elaborate on the vices which are to be avoided and the virtues a Christian should hold dear and put into practice and outline the punishments meted out to sinners and the merits with which the just will be rewarded in the hereafter.[35] There is no fixed order in the enumerations of sins and virtues, but the most important sins in the sermons are idolatry, drinking, sex, and violence, while among the virtues love (*caritas*), humility, patience, mercy and obedience rank the highest. The close correspondence with the *Admonitio* suggests that the pseudo-Bonifatian sermons were influenced by Charlemagne's legislation.[36] Gerhard Schmitz has

31 Means, "Christianization and the Spoken Word," 215–17. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 212, 220, 485, and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6293 (written around 800 in Freising); I see no reason to assume a Bavarian origin on the basis of manuscript provenance, as claimed by Maximilian Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern: Karl der Große, Arn von Salzburg und die Salzburger Sermones-Sammlung* (Berlin and Boston: 2016), 231.

32 *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen*, eds. Hubert Mordek, Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, and Michael Glatthaar, MGH Fontes iures 16 (Hanover: 2012), c. 80 (c. 82 in the earlier edition of Boretius), 234: "Utilia, honesta et recta et quae ad vitam ducunt aeternam praedicate aliosque instruite, ut haec eadem praedicent." For Alcuin's role, see 47–63. See the detailed discussion of this chapter in Thomas Martin Buck, *Admonitio und Praedicatio. Zur religions-pastoralen Dimension von Kapitularien und kapitulariennahen Texten (507–814)*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 9 (Frankfurt: 1997), 116–56.

33 Sermo 1, *PL* 89, cols. 813–15.

34 Sermo 2, *PL* 89, cols. 815–17.

35 Means, "Christianization and the Spoken Word," 218–20; and in more detail Schmitz, "Bonifatius and Alcuin," 79–82.

36 See Mordek, Zechiel-Eckes, and Glatthaar, *Admonitio*, 142.

stressed the relationship of the sermons to the *Admonitio*, in particular with one of the main architects of the *Admonitio*, Alcuin. The pseudo-Bonifatian sermons reflect Alcuinian thought, even though they may not necessarily have been composed by the Anglo-Saxon scholar at Charlemagne's court. If these conclusions are correct, they would rule out the possibility of Boniface having authored these sermons,[37] though this would only be true for the collection as a whole, and not necessarily for the individual sermons in the collection, some of which might have predated the *Admonitio*.

Definitive conclusions regarding this collection of sermons attributed to Boniface must await a modern critical edition which will provide more answers to the question of its unity and the possibility that individual sermons might predate the collection.[38] A thorough investigation of its sources will also provide more information on the issue of its date and intellectual milieu in which it originated. For now, we can say on the basis of the available studies that we are dealing with a collection of sermons that is closely connected with the Carolingian program of reform in the field of preaching. There are indications that the collection originated in an "Alcuinian milieu." The collection may have used existing sermons, or preaching materials, that can be connected to insular circles on the Continent, thus explaining their attribution to Boniface. In general, they provide an impression of the themes that were addressed by someone preaching to a diverse lay audience in the 8th and 9th centuries, informing and admonishing them about proper Christian morality and behaviour.[39]

3 Penance

The sermons attributed to Boniface devote ample attention to the vices a Christian should avoid and the virtues he should practice, and some discuss ways to make up for one's faults. For example, in Sermon 8 penance is

37 Schmitz, "Bonifatius and Alcuin"; a conclusion apparently shared by James McCune, "The Preacher's Audience, c. 800–c. 950," in *Sermo Doctorum: Compilers, Preachers, and their Audiences in the Early Medieval West*, eds. Maximilian Diesenberger, Yithak Hen and Marianne Pollheimer, Sermo: Studies on Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation Sermons and Preaching 9 (Turnhout: 2013), 311: "the collection known as Pseudo-Boniface, which was likely composed c. 800 and may be from the circle of Alcuin."

38 For such an edition, the use of Sermo 10 in manuscript Cologne, Dombibliothek, 171, fols. 3v–4r, should also be considered; see Raymond Étaix, "Le sermonnaire d'Hildebold de Cologne," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 23 (1988), 116 (I owe this reference to Bart van Hees).

39 For a summary of the topics discussed, see Rob Meens, "Aspekte der Christianisierung des Volkes," 215–18.

discussed as the most important remedy for sins, for in confession and penance all sins can be abolished: "In confession and penance all sins can be erased.... Let him [the fallen sinner] rise through confession and penance and return to the Lord, his God."[40] This theme recurs in most of the sermons and many of the sins that are being castigated here are also found in penitential manuals. We may assume that Boniface as a priest and bishop was well acquainted with ways to deal with sinners, particularly because of his interest in acceptable and unacceptable forms of Christianity, as demonstrated by the reform councils over which he presided. The Concilium Germanicum of 742,[41] for example, not only condemned clerics to do penance for their transgressions, but also admonished the ruler to take bishops and priests with him when he travelled with the army, in order that they could hear confession and assign a proper form of penance.[42] Moreover, Pope Gregory III admonished Boniface to assign penance to those who ate horseflesh, indicating that he expected Boniface to employ penance as a disciplinary tool.[43]

In England, where Boniface had been raised, handbooks of penance based on teachings by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury had been composed in the late 7th and early 8th century. One of these referred to a *Libellus Scottorum* or "a little book by the Irish," probably the 7th-century penitential of the Irish abbot Cummean.[44] We may assume that a number of such books were known in missionary circles on the Continent; surviving Irish penitential books are mostly known from a small number of Continental manuscripts.[45] The traditions based on Theodore of Canterbury also mostly survive in manuscripts that were copied on the European mainland. The penitential attributed to Egbert, Bishop of York, survives in a copy that is now preserved in the Vatican Library, a precious manuscript written in an Anglo-Saxon hand that we can date to around 800. The text therefore may be Anglo-Saxon and could have

40 Sermo 8, *PL* 89, 859B: "in confessione et poenitentia omnia possunt deleri peccata.... surgat per confessionem et poenitentiam et revertatur ad dominum Deum suum."

41 Michael Glatthaar has argued for this date in *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 594–599.

42 *Concilium Germanicum*, MGH Conc. 2.1, c. 1–2, c. 6.

43 Tangl, no. 28, 50.

44 For penitential books in general see Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600–1200* (Cambridge: 2014); for those works circulating in Anglo-Saxon England, ibidem, 88–100.

45 Raymund Kottje, "Überlieferung und Rezeption der irischen Bußbücher auf dem Kontinent," in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Heinz Löwe, vol.1 (Stuttgart: 1982), 511–24; Rob Meens, "The Irish Contribution to the Penitential Tradition," in *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture and Religion*, eds. Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (New York: 2016), 131–45.

been known to Boniface, who was in contact with the bishop of York.[46] The Irishman Columbanus, who had travelled from his native country to Francia and later to Lombardy in Italy, had written a penitential manual, or perhaps authorized the use of a particular one, and this work became an inspiration for a number of Frankish books of this kind.

Insular penitential books were therefore known in Francia, particularly in the northern parts, where Boniface was most active. We can assume that they played their part in the process of Christianization, as instruments helping a recently converted population to adhere to Christian forms of behaviour. The early 8th-century penitential known as *Paenitentiale Oxoniense II*, named after the place where its only surviving manuscript is being preserved, is clearly addressed to a group of recent converts to Christianity. The text alludes to cooperation between Christians and their non-Christian neighbours, which indicates that it was written with a mixed audience in mind. These non-Christians, *gentiles* as the author calls them, also applied pressure on Christians to return to their earlier non-Christian beliefs, and they enticed them to do so by offering material benefits. The text can be dated to the first half of the 8th century and, moreover, can be associated with particular Frisian customs, such as the license to kill an unwanted newborn baby as long as it had not been fed. This could therefore be a book that Boniface might have used when dealing with sinning Christians. However, the remarkably lenient attitude towards sin in this penitential does not seem to fit with the ways in which Boniface writes about misbehaving fellow Christians. The *Paenitentiale Oxoniense II* should therefore rather be associated with Boniface's compatriot and teacher, Willibrord, than with the bishop of Mainz himself.[47]

There is, however, another penitential book, composed in the first half of the 8th century, that can be associated with Boniface: a manual known as the *Excarpsus Cummeani*.[48] This text was composed in the northern French monastery of Corbie in close connection with the revision that was being made

46 Tangl, no. 75 is addressed to Egbert. For the penitential and the Vatican manuscript (Vat. Pal. lat. 554), see the discussion in Meens, *Penance*, 96–100.

47 For this text, see Rob Meens, "Willibrord's Penitential?: The *Paenitentiale Oxoniense II* Revisited," in *Transforming the Early Medieval World: Studies in Honour of Ian N. Wood*, eds. N. Kivilcim Yavuz and Richard Broome (Leeds: 2020).

48 Unfortunately, a modern edition is still lacking, and scholars have to rely on Hermann Joseph Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher und das kanonische Bussverfahren* (Düsseldorf: 1898, repr. Graz: 1958), 597–644. The text has been thoroughly analysed in Franz Bernd Asbach, "Das *Poenitentiale Remense* und der sogen. *Excarpsus Cummeani*: Überlieferung, Quellen und Entwicklung zweier kontinentaler Bußbücher aus der 1. Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts," PhD Diss. (University of Regensburg: 1975).

there of an extremely influential collection of canon law texts, the *Collectio Vetus Gallica*.[49] Boniface entertained close connections with the monastery of Corbie, in particular with its abbot Grimo, for whom he requested the *pallium* from the pope in the year 744. It can be demonstrated that Boniface and Corbie were in close correspondence and must have exchanged texts that were used to enforce Christian discipline.[50] It is hard to imagine that Boniface would not have heard about the ambitious new penitential book the monks of Corbie were compiling, given his interests in disciplinary rulings. The *Excarpsus Cummeani* was by far the most successful of the 8th- entury penitential books, surviving in more than 20 manuscripts.[51] The book is a composition almost entirely based on earlier works, mostly the Irish penitential of Cummean, the penitential judgements of Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, and the first generation of Frankish penitentials that elaborated upon Columbanus's work. It is a rather comprehensive work, organized in 14 chapters and containing almost 300 individual judgments. On further inspection it becomes clear, however, that the compiler (or compilers) did not attempt to produce an all-inclusive penitential, but carefully decided what to include and exclude.[52]

The *Excarpsus Cummeani* addressed many issues that we know Boniface was worried about, confirming that the text was composed in a cultural environment that was shared by our missionary.[53] We know, for example, that Boniface worried seriously about the proper behaviour of clerics. The Concilium Germanicum that he convoked in 742 dealt with "false priests and adulterous and fornicating deacons." The council declared their ecclesiastical income forfeited and that the sinning clerics be deposed and forced to do penance.[54] In a letter from the same year to Pope Zachary, Boniface was even more outspoken when he complained about deacons who, while entertaining four or five concubines, had nevertheless been promoted to the priesthood

49 The Corbie provenance was established by Ludger Körntgen, "Der *Excarpsus Cummeani*, ein Bußbuch aus Corbie," in *Scientia veritatis: Festschrift für Hubert Mordek zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Oliver Münsch and Thomas Zotz (Ostfildern: 2004), 59–75. The *Collectio Vetus Gallica* has been analysed thoroughly by Hubert Mordek, *Kirchenrecht und Reform im Frankenreich: Die Collectio Vetus Gallica, die älteste systematische Kanonessammlung des fränkischen Gallien. Studien und Edition*. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 1 (Berlin and New York: 1975).

50 Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 384–89.

51 See the list in Meens, *Penance*, 229–30.

52 Rob Meens, *Het tripartite boeteboek: Overlevering en betekenis van vroegmiddeleeuwse biechtvoorschriften* (*met editie en vertaling van vier* tripartita) (Hilversum: 1994), 269–97 and 314.

53 As I argued in "Aspekte der Christianisierung," 218–27.

54 *Concilium Germanicum*, MGH Conc. 2.1, c. 1, 3.

without them changing their lifestyle and sometimes were even made into bishops.[55] This suggests that deacons, priests, and bishops were leading a life that was hard to distinguish from an aristocratic one, as is also suggested by the fact that the Concilium Germanicum ruled against clerics carrying weapons or going out hunting.[56] These issues are also addressed in the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, which censures bishops, priests, and deacons who "fornicate": they should be deposed and do penance according to the judgment of their bishop.[57] After receiving a clerical ordination, the text decrees, men were no longer allowed to go hunting. A cleric sinning in this way had to do penance for a year, a deacon for two years, and an extra year was added for a priest who went hunting.[58]

Clerical discipline was perhaps the main concern of Boniface, but the issues of marriage and sexuality also attracted his attention quite regularly.[59] As we have seen, it is the main theme of a sermon from Boniface's circle, the so-called "Alloquutio sacerdotum de coniugiis inlicitis ad plebem." The sermon discusses incest, explaining and tabulating the degrees of relationship within which marriage and sexual relations were taboo. In the 8th century incest was a topic of hefty discussion, with different positions being taken on the question of who was allowed to marry whom.[60] On this topic Boniface was confronted with three major, diverging sources of authority. In Gaul bishops and kings had legislated widely on incest and targeted not only relations founded on blood, but also ones based on affinity through marriage. The papacy, one of the main sources of authority for Boniface, had come up with different precepts. Pope Gregory the Great discussed this issue in a letter sent to Augustine of Canterbury, a widely disseminated letter known as the *Libellus Responsionum*, the authenticity of which was doubted by Boniface. Pope Gregory II had widely expanded the incest regulation in the Roman council of the year 721, when he also considered forms of spiritual kinship established by acting as godparent as proscribing marriage. Irish and Anglo-Saxon texts expressed little or no interest at all in the question of kinship established by affinity or godparenthood. Boniface's correspondence demonstrates that he felt uncomfortable with such diversity and that he had particular problems with some of these rules. The *Excarpsus Cummeani* also dealt with this issue and by its adherence to rules

55 Tangl, no. 50, 82–83.

56 *Concilium Germanicum*, MGH Conc. 2.1, c.1–2, 3.

57 *Excarpsus Cummeani* II.1, ed. Schmitz, 608.

58 *Excarpsus Cummeani* I.33, ed. Schmitz, 607.

59 Karl Ubl, *Inzest und Gesetzgebung*, 218–19.

60 See in particular Ubl, *Inzest und Gesetzgebung*, 219–51 in a chapter titled "Bonifatius und der Zusammenstoß der Kulturen."

such as Theodore of Canterbury had established, and its stance in general concurs with that of Boniface. That the *Excarpsus* was sometimes read in conjunction with papal texts discussing incest legislation might suggest an early interest in matters of marriage and incest legislation in Corbie that could have been related to an interest of Boniface himself.[61]

In general, the topic of sexual relations is a major concern in penitential books, and this also applies to the *Excarpsus Cummeani*.[62] In Chapters 2 and 3 many forms of human sexual behaviour are discussed and censured. Here we find rules condemning sexual activities by clerics or boys living in a monastery, but also many forms of extra-marital sexual activities. These rules furthermore regulate sexual behaviour within marriage, specifying sexual positions a married couple should refrain from as well as indicating specific periods in which sexual activity was not allowed. Man and wife should, for example, not have sex during periods of fasting, on Saturday or Sunday night, or during pregnancy or menstruation.[63] Irish penitentials strongly defended the matrimonial union, leaving little or no room for dissolving a marriage. The penitential of Cummean, one of the sources of the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, ruled that man and wife should remain continent if the wife should be barren, implying that such a marriage should not be dissolved.[64] Since it is hard to imagine that it was possible at the time to establish whether the woman was to blame for the couple's failure to produce offspring or the man, this rule must have been intended to be employed every time a couple was unable to beget children. We know from his correspondence that Boniface had to deal with a similar problem: he appears to have consulted Pope Gregory II in a case in which a man was unable to have sex with his wife because of her illness. Cummean had decided that it would be better for the couple to refrain from sexual activity, and in 726 the pope replied that this was indeed the best choice, but that not many would be able to do so. Therefore he allowed the man in question to remarry, but only if

61 As argued in Ludger Körntgen, "Bonifatius, Bayern und das fränkische Kirchenrecht: Zur Überlieferung des Capitulare Papst Gregors II. für Bayern (716)," in *Konstanz und Wandel. Religiöse Lebensformen im europäischen Mittelalter*, eds. Gordon Blenneman, Christine Kleinjung, and Thomas Kohl. Studien und Texte zur Geistes- und Sozialgeschichte des Mittelalters 11 (Affalterbach: 2016), 33–56.

62 For discussions of sex in these sources see Pierre Payer, *Sex and the Penitentials: The Development of a Sexual Code, 550–1150* (Toronto: 1984); see also Erin V. Abraham, *Anticipating Sin in Medieval Society Childhood, Sexuality, and Violence in the Early Penitentials* (Amsterdam: 2017).

63 *Excarpsus Cummeani* III.18, ed. Schmitz, 614.

64 *Paenitentiale Cummeani* II.28, ed. Ludwig Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials, with an Appendix by D.A. Binchy,* Scriptores Latini Hiberniae 5 (Dublin: 1963), 116.

he would continue to take care of his first wife.[65] Although the *Excarpsus Cummeani* adopts many rules from Cummean's work, it leaves out the ruling concerning man and wife refraining from sexual activity when they could not beget children. Is this perhaps due to the letter Boniface received from Pope Gregory II?

Boniface also had to deal with the issue of violence among Christians, lay and clerical. From a response by Pope Gregory III it becomes clear that Boniface had sought advice on how to deal with people who had killed their father, mother, brother, or sister. The pope replied that such people were to be excluded from receiving the Eucharist until the end of their life.[66] In a letter to Pope Zachary from the year 742 Boniface complained about bishops who went to war fully armed and killed not only pagans but also Christians. Although the theme of parricide is not explicitly addressed in the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, it deals in great detail with matters of violence, ranging from what look like innocent blows carried out by children to premeditated murder. It also discusses clerics, deacons, priests, and bishops committing murder. In such a case a simple cleric had to fulfil five years of penance, a deacon seven years, a priest ten, and a bishop twelve years.[67]

As a missionary Boniface was confronted with forms of paganism among people he encountered, though perhaps less so than one would expect since he seems to have been more active in organizing and disciplining a recently converted population than as a preacher to the unconverted. Boniface frequently addressed the problem of recent converts entertaining certain practices or beliefs that he regarded as out of line with Christianity. It is important to realize that the boundaries between the lawful and the illicit in this respect were not always clear-cut. This is exemplified in the famous list of religious practices and beliefs found in a Bonifatian context in the manuscript Vatican Palatinus Latinus 577, a list misleadingly titled *Indiculus Superstitionum*. In the manuscript, the list lacks a title and the interpretation of this enumeration of sometimes rather enigmatic practices and beliefs as representing forms of paganism or superstition does not seem justified. It is more reasonable to see this text as a list of problematic issues that needed to be decided upon during conciliar meetings, most probably the Concilium Germanicum.[68] That Boniface regularly encountered behaviour that he regarded as pagan is clear

65 Tangl, no. 26, 45.

66 Tangl, no. 28, 51.

67 *Excarpsus Cummeani*, ed. Schmitz, Chapter VI, 622–25, for murder committed by clerics see Chapter XVI; for the blows of little ones, see Chapter XXVI.

68 *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 222–23. See esp. Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume, Chapter 10.4. For

from his correspondence. In one of his letters Boniface complained about a priest who had made sacrificial offerings to Jupiter and had taken part in meals related to pagan festivals.[69] Famous is also Boniface's complaint to Pope Zachary in the year 742 that Alemanni, Bavarians, and Franks had witnessed festivities celebrating the New Year in Rome itself, even near the church of St Peter. These festivities included singing and dancing, eating and drinking, and were in Boniface's eyes a clear manifestation of a pagan custom. How could he combat pagan festivities if members of his flock saw such things happening in Rome itself?[70] Like many other penitential books, the *Excarpsus Cummeani* includes a number of judgments dealing with religious beliefs and practices that Boniface would find intolerable and in general would denounce as pagan. For example, Chapter VII deals with Christians taking part in festive meals near pagan cult sites and those eating sacrificial food.[71] It also addresses the festival of the New Year in which people would go around in some sort of disguise (the terminology is not very clear but probably in the guise of a calf or a deer). For taking part in this "cult for demons" (*daemonium*), three years of penance is required.[72]

The last topic that is addressed both by Boniface and in the *Excarpsus Cummeani* concerns dietary rules. Boniface was clearly worried about specific kinds of meat that a Christian could or could not consume, and penitential literature very often contains rules on the proper kinds of food for Christians.[73] Pope Gregory III insisted around the year 732 that Boniface should under no circumstances allow that people eat horse meat whether from wild or domestic animals, because that was unclean and abominable.[74] Almost twenty years later, the issue of eating horse meat was apparently not yet clear to Boniface, since Pope Zachary responded to an inquiry of the aged bishop that wild horses were

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a contrasting view on the circumstances of the list's compilation, see Marco Mostert's contribution in this volume, Chapter 14.3.

69 As is clear from the response of Gregory III in Tangl, no. 28, 51.

70 Tangl, no. 50, 84.

71 *Excarpsus Cummeani* VII.10 and 17, ed. Schmitz, 627.

72 *Excarpsus Cummeani* VII.9, ibidem.

73 See Rob Meens, "Pollution in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of the Food-Regulations in Penitentials," *EME* 4, no. 1 (1995), 3–19; idem, "Eating Animals in the Early Middle Ages: Classifying the Animal World and Building Group Identities," in *The Animal/Human Boundary*, eds. Angela Craeger and William Chester Jordan (Rochester, NY: 2002), 3–28; Alain Dierkens, "'Equus non prohibetur ad manducandum, tamen non est consuetudo': Goûts, dégoûts et interdits alimentaires pendant le haut Moyen Âge," in *L'Alimentazione nell'alto Medioevo: Pratiche, simboli, ideologie: Spoleto, 9–14 aprile 2015.* Settimane di studio della Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 63 (Spoleto: 2016), 413–44.

74 Tangl, no. 28, 50.

not to be served at the table, and neither were beavers or hares. Jackdaws, crows, and storks were also prohibited by the pope.[75] The fact that Boniface found it necessary to inquire once more into the question of the permissibility of horse meat was probably not motivated by his lack of memory, but should rather be explained by the judgment found in the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, that it was not forbidden to eat horse, but that it was not customary to do so either. The penitential adds that eating hare was allowed.[76] It seems probable that Boniface knew that these rules were based on judgments made by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, whom the same pope had characterized as "the Greco-Roman Theodorus, once a learned philosopher at Athens, then ordained and given the pallium at Rome and then sent on to Britain" and as a person who had produced authoritative judgments.[77] Since Theodore had explicitly condoned the consumption of horse meat and hare, Boniface must have been confused on this issue, and for that reason probably felt pressed to inquire once again into this issue.

We can therefore conclude that clerical discipline, incest regulations, sexual behaviour, forms of violence, improper religious rituals, and dietary rules are not only themes that concerned Boniface as his letters and councils clearly demonstrate, but that these also form the core of the penitential handbook that was composed in Corbie during his lifetime. This suggests that Boniface might have been personally involved in the composition of the *Excarpsus Cummeani*.

4 Conclusion

This chapter is rather speculative. It deals with sermons attributed to Boniface and with the penitential handbook known as the *Excarpsus Cummeani*, texts which were produced in a cultural environment that was arguably close or even very close to the Anglo-Saxon missionary and reformer. Although these texts do give us an idea of the ways in which Boniface might have preached, heard confession, and assigned penances, conclusive evidence that he authored, knew, or used these texts does not exist, nor is there any other evidence indicating which texts Boniface may have used in such circumstances. Boniface's rich correspondence and other documents that demonstrably can be associated with him do, however, indicate that the sources that we have

75 Tangl, no. 87, 196.

76 *Excarpsus Cummeani* 1.23–24, ed. Schmitz, 607.

77 Tangl, no. 80, 173.

considered in this chapter fit the cultural environment of the missionary as well as what we know of his personality. They illustrate how sermons transmitted basic knowledge of the Christian faith and thereby suggest which aspects of Christianity were deemed important and which ones less so in this early phase of Christianisation; the Creation, the Trinity, the coming of Christ, and the Last Judgment were presented as basic tenets of the Christian faith. Christians should also know the Creed and the Pater Noster. In addition, preaching treated the theme of the vices and virtues, and the sermons discussed here are particularly interesting for the way in which they speak about specific forms of behaviour expected of the old and young, men and women, the poor and the rich. Confessing sins and doing appropriate penance for them was also frequently addressed in sermons, as these texts indicate.

The *Excarpsus Cummeani* gives us an idea of what sins were particularly important for Boniface and his entourage when hearing confession and how they imagined that those infringements should be remedied through penance. This penitential book was composed in Corbie in the first half of the 8th century, and Boniface was probably aware of the enterprise leading to its composition, and may have been somehow involved in its production. This remarkable penitential book clearly addresses several issues that were of great concern for Boniface. It deals with clerical discipline, incest regulations, sexual behaviour, forms of violence, improper religious rituals, and dietary rules, all themes discussed in some way or another in Boniface's correspondence and councils. Although neither the sermons attributed to Boniface nor the *Excarpsus Cummeani* can demonstrably be linked to the person of Boniface himself, they do give us a good impression of ways in which priests and missionaries might have preached and heard confession when ministering to their flocks in the region and the period in which Boniface worked.

CHAPTER 10

Boniface and the Reform Councils

Michael Glatthaar

1 Introduction[1]

When Boniface arrived on the Continent to missionize among the Frisians and the Saxons, he found a fractured Frankish church in urgent need of reform. The most pressing concerns were to restore the proper hierarchy according to traditional canon law, to reinstate integrity and competence among the clergy, and to guarantee the clergy's income from the properties of bishoprics and monasteries. For Boniface, these elements were essential in order to steer the lay population toward a proper Christian way of life. To achieve this ambitious programme, he needed the help of the Frankish elites, and Carloman and Pippin in particular. It was at church councils and general assemblies that Boniface, as papal legate and archbishop, was able to enact decisive reforms issued in the form of decrees which helped to establish a pattern for future Carolingian legislation and would significantly mould the era. The origin and content of these decrees, and Boniface's contributions to them, are the subjects of this chapter. The efforts of Boniface that led up to the reforms under Charles Martel and in Bavaria will also be discussed, as well as Boniface's continued influence on English legislation.

2 The Foundation: Councils Supported by Secular Power

Only a few of Boniface's letters to Rome have been preserved, but the oldest of them, a letter from 742 welcoming the new pope, Zachary, is particularly

1 This contribution is largely based on my *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte 17 (Frankfurt am Main: 2004). See also Gregory I. Halfond, *Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768*, Medieval Law and Its Practice 6 (Leiden and Boston: 2010); Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850*, Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law 8 (Washington, DC: 2011); Karl Ubl, *Die Karolinger: Herrscher und Reich* (Munich: 2014); and Roman Deutinger, "Recht und Raum in den Anfängen der karolingischen Reform: Zu den fränkischen Synoden 742–762," *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History* 23 (2015), 110–18.

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expressive. Like a trumpet flourish, it announces the renewal of church councils in the Carolingian realm:

> Be it known also to your Paternity that Carloman, Duke of the Franks, summoned me to him and requested to make arrangements for bringing together a council in the part of the Frankish kingdom which is under his rule. He promised that he would do something toward reforming and purifying the ecclesiastical religion, which for a long time, not less than 60 or 70 years, has been despoiled and trampled upon.[2]

According to this letter, Carloman instructed Boniface to make preparations for a council, an assembly of his bishops and other dignitaries, in order to resurrect the languishing Church and religion itself. It seemed to Boniface that the reason for this decline lay in the collapse of church organization in late Merovingian Francia. For Boniface, unity and discipline within the Church could be achieved and maintained only through regular councils of the kind familiar to him from England. Accordingly, he viewed the religious decline in the Frankish realm as a consequence of an organizational decline. Boniface pinpointed the moment of the break precisely: "The Franks, according to their seniors, have not held a council for more than eighty years, nor have they had an archbishop or established or restored anywhere the canon law of the Church."[3] Scholars have questioned the "eighty years," pointing to the small diocesan council of Auxerre (692/696), which is not directly attested.[4] Boniface, however, was not considering diocesan but rather central councils, which were convened under royal auspices. If one disregards two smaller councils in Saint-Pierre-de-Granon and Saint-Jean-de-Losne (both 673/675), the last major council really was over eighty years ago: Chalon-sur-Saône (647/653). At this council, thirty-nine bishops and six delegates from seven provinces assembled in the name of King Clovis II signed twenty canons and called attention to the fact that the metropolitan bishops should meet annually for a synodal council

2 Tangl, no. 50, 82: "Notum similiter sit paternitati vestrae, quod Carlomannus dux Francorum me arcessitum ad se rogavit, ut in parte regni Francorum, quae in sua est potestate, synodum cepere congregare. Et promisit se de ęcclesiastica religione, quę iam longo tempore, id est non minus quam per LX vel LXX annos, calcata et dissipata fuit, aliquid corrigere et emendare vellet." Translated using Emerton, no. 40, 57.

3 Tangl, no. 50, 82: "Franci enim, ut seniores dicunt, plus quam per tempus octuginta annorum synodum non fecerunt nec archiepiscopum habuerunt nec aecclesiae canonica iura alicubi fundabant vel renovabant." Translated using Emerton, no. 40, 57.

4 For example Halfond, *Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils*, 198.

with their co-provincial bishops.[5] After eighty years, Boniface's reform enabled such canons to be put into practice again.

The details in Boniface's letter are revealing in two regards: first, he names "senior Franks" as informants, which here means both "old" and "high-ranking Franks." They must have had at their disposal a source similar to the Gallic dossier which included the canons from Chalon-sur-Saône and is contained in collections of manuscripts from northeastern France housed at Saint-Amand and Beauvais (*Collectio Sancti Amandi* and *Collectio Bellovacensis*). The transmission of the collection from Saint-Amand points to Corbie, to the monastery of Abbot Grimo, who really was an "old" and "high-ranking" Carolingian who might recently have met Boniface at the Concilium Germanicum and who, as Archbishop of Rouen, was to become Boniface's only metropolitan colleague in Carloman's part of the realm.

Second, the future of the reform would stand or fall with Carloman. In a letter to his former bishop, Daniel of Winchester, also written in 742, Boniface expresses this unambiguously:

> Without the protection of the *princeps* of the Franks, I can neither govern the people of the Church nor defend priests and clerics, monks and handmaids of God; nor am I able to prevent the rites of the heathens and the sacrileges of idols in Germany without his mandate and the fear of him.[6]

This explains why the resolutions of the first Carolingian councils exist only in the form of sovereign decrees. Boniface himself obviously set great store by this since Carloman's two fundamental decrees are known primarily from Bonifatian collections. Only Pippin's decree has survived elsewhere. While the powers of church and state were separated under Chlothar II – on the one hand by the clerical decisions of the Council of Paris (10 October 614), on the other by the royal edict of Clothar II (18 October 614)[7] – they were now fused under the aegis of the Carolingians. Boniface was pragmatic enough to accept this development and to rely on Carloman and Pippin as associates and helpers.

5 MGH Conc. 1, 208.

6 Tangl, no. 63, 130: "Sine patrocinio principis Francorum nec populum ęcclesiae regere nec presbiteros vel clericos, monachos vel ancillas Dei defendere possum nec ipsos paganorum ritus et sacrilegia idolorum in Germania sine illius mandato et timore prohibere valeo." The translation mainly follows Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, vol. 1: *c. 500–1042* (London and New York: 1979), 814.

7 MGH Conc. 1, 185–92 (council), MGH Cap. 1, 20–23 (edict).

3 First Councils under Odilo of Bavaria (739) and New Bishops in Central Germany

Initially, however, a smaller area served as a test ground. In 738 Boniface returned from his third and longest visit to Rome as a freshly appointed legate. This position normally entailed representing the Pope at councils. He brought a letter of recommendation from Gregory III which called upon five bishops in the province of the Bavarians and in Alemannia to hold councils wherever Boniface convened them.[8] A further letter from Gregory in the following year comments on Boniface's report on the establishment of the four Bavarian dioceses, with the agreement of Odilo and his *optimates*. Moreover, he orders Boniface to hold a council "in our stead" on the banks of the Danube.[9] From Willibald's *Life* of Boniface we know that of the five bishops addressed by the older letter only Vivilo of Passau was confirmed in office. The remaining ducal cities of Salzburg, Freising, and Regensburg received new bishops.[10]

Unfortunately, no document by Duke Odilo remains – and yet much depended on his word. Gregory II's instruction to his legates to Bavaria, prompted by Duke Theodo (716), obviously acted as a model. At that time an archbishopric was planned, with three, four, or perhaps even more dioceses in various ducal cities, but the plan for the archbishopric failed to become reality in 738–739. Boniface may also have known of Gregory II's instruction, for its manuscript transmission is concentrated in the south-German branch of the *Collectio Vetus Gallica* which had originated under Grimo of Corbie.[11] From 740 to 741 a rebellion in Bavaria would drive Odilo into exile to France and Boniface back to central Germany.[12]

Boniface brought from Rome two further letters by Gregory III addressed to all bishops, priests, and abbots of every province, and to all the *optimates* and people of the German provinces, Thuringians, Hessians, and others.[13] By October 741 at the latest Boniface had bishops on hand in Sülzenbrücken

8 Tangl, no. 44, 71.

9 Tangl, no. 45, 72–73.

10 Carl I. Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum": Ruling Bavaria under the Merovingians and Early Carolingians* (Turnhout: 2007), 76–80.

11 Some doubts about this have been expressed by Ludger Körntgen, "Bonifatius, Bayern und das fränkische Kirchenrecht: Zur Überlieferung des Capitulare Papst Gregors II. für Bayern (716)," in *Konstanz und Wandel: Religiöse Lebensformen im europäischen Mittelalter*, eds. Gordon Blennemann, Christine Kleinjung, and Thomas Kohl. Studien und Texte zur Geistes- und Sozialgeschichte des Mittelalters 11 (Affalterbach: 2016), 33–56.

12 Joachim Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum: Das bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger*. Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 35 (Stuttgart: 1991), 172–76, 248–49.

13 Tangl, no. 42 and no. 43.

(Thuringia) when Burchard and Witta assisted at the consecration of Willibald of Eichstätt as bishop, yet evidence shows that Würzburg, Burchard's episcopal see, was only established and endowed by Carloman. Burchard and Witta were probably, like Boniface himself, missionary bishops without a see, who became diocesan bishops as soon as Würzburg and Büraburg were founded.

4 The Anti-pagan Decree of Charles Martel (ca. 739) and the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* (Probably February/April 742)

In the second of the aforementioned letters, Gregory III exhorts the Thuringians, Hessians, and others to anti-pagan measures, as follows:

> Abstain and keep yourselves from every kind of heathen practice, and not yourselves only, my beloved, but all who are subject to you. Turn your minds wholly to God, utterly rejecting and casting off soothsayers and lot-casters, the sacrifices to the dead or in groves or at springs, auguries, amulets, enchanters and sorcerers, that is to say, evil magicians and the sacrilegious observances that are habitually performed in your territory.[14]

This resulted in a decree by Charles Martel, which is lost but is mentioned and renewed by Carloman in the last chapter of the decree of Estinnes: "We have also decreed, as my father did before me, that those who engage in pagan practices of any sort are to be condemned to pay a fine of fifteen s*olidi*."[15] Charles Martel cannot have hesitated long in receiving Boniface and complying with Gregory's appeal that Boniface brought from Rome in 738: the anti-pagan

14 Tangl, no. 43, 69: "Vos autem … abstinete et prohibete vosmet ipsos ab omni cultu paganorum, non tantum vosmet ipsos corrigentes, karissimi, sed et subditos vestros. Divinos autem vel sortilegos, sacrificia mortuorum seu lucorum vel fontium auguria vel filacteria et incantatores et veneficos, id est maleficos, et observationes sacrilegas, quae in vestris finibus fieri solebant, omnino respuentes atque abicientes tota mentis intentione ad Deum convertimini." Translated using Emerton, no. 33, 48 and Bernadette Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature*. Studies and Texts 151 (Toronto: 2005), 206. See also a similar exhortation in Tangl, no. 44, 71.

15 MGH Capit. 1, 28, Conc. 2, 7, following the letter collection Tangl, no. 56, 102: "Decrevimus quoque, quod et pater meus ante praecipiebat, ut, qui paganas observationes in aliqua re fecerit, multetur et damnetur quindecim solidis." Translated using Alexander Callander Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader*. Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures 5 (Peterborough: 1999), 651.

decree passed ca. 739, since Charles Martel fell ill soon after, an illness that lasted until his death in October 741.

The *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, a list of thirty superstitions and pagan practices very likely compiled by Boniface and written down in the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae* (Vatican Pal. lat. 577), appears in the manuscript just one folio after the two decrees of Carloman.[16] The sequence of items in Vatican Pal. lat. 577 has led some historians to date the *Indiculus* to around the time of or following the decree from Estinnes 743, yet there is a compelling reason for an earlier dating.

The *Indiculus* is clearly linked not only to Gregory's letter but also to Carloman's first decree, which was influenced by Boniface. This connection is attested by a significant overlap in the wording of both documents: both the *Indiculus* and the decree refer to "the sacrifice which is offered to any of the saints" (*Indiculus* 9); and "the fire made by friction from wood, that is, *nodfyr*" (*Indiculus* 15). A comparison of the texts shows that initially the decree follows the wording of Gregory's letter, but later that of the *Indiculus*.[17] If, conversely, the *Indiculus* had drawn on the decree, the sequence of the pagan practices would have been disrupted. From this the following chronology emerges: first, Gregory's letter (738) and the *Indiculus*, then the decree (21 April 742).

Further evidence to support this dating comes from references to pagan beliefs relating to the moon and lunar eclipses mentioned in the *Indiculus*:

16 *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, MGH Cap. 1, 222–23; translated by Yitzhak Hen, "The Early Medieval West," in *The Cambridge History of Magic and Witchcraft in the West: From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. David J. Collins (Cambridge: 2015), 183–84. The manuscript has been digitized at https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav_pal_lat_577 (Codices Palatini latini). The Old Saxon Baptismal Vow, renouncing the heathen gods Donar (Thor), Wodan, and Saxnot, is copied immediately in front of the *Indiculus* and may have been used by Boniface already in 729, when the baptism of East Saxon princes was on the agenda; see Glatthaar, "Gregor II. und Karl Martell im Jahr 729," in *Scientia veritatis: Festschrift für Hubert Mordek zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Oliver Münsch and Thomas Zotz (Ostfildern: 2004), 77–90. On the other hand, Marco Mostert, "Communicating the Faith: the Circle of Boniface, Germanic Vernaculars, and Frisian and Saxon Converts," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 70 (2013), 87–130, advocates for the origins of the Vow (and the *Indiculus*) in Utrecht (with Northumbrian overtones). However, there, too, the connection with Boniface and East Saxons would be preserved: Willibrord's bases in the Thuringia of Heden II (since 704); the beginning of Boniface's missionary work in Radbod's Frisia (716); his work under Willibrord (since 719, for three years); and his work in Thuringia (as a priest in 719, as a bishop from 722). What would be easier than to include elements from Utrecht in a baptismal vow drafted for East Saxons?

17 Synopses in Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 594–96.

> (21) Of the eclipse of the moon, which they call 'Triumph Moon'.
> (30) Of this, that they believe that (some) women command the moon (and) that they may be able to take away the hearts of men, according to the pagans.[18]

A comparison of lunar eclipses in Boniface's surroundings during this time is enlightening: eight lunar eclipses were visible in Germany between 1 November 738 and 24 February 742. Highly relevant are two total eclipses, partly visible in Germany, on 7 March and 31 August 741, and a partial eclipse on 24 February 742 that was visible in Thuringia and Hessia.[19] The very same month is also marked by the "*spurcalia* in February," which the *Indiculus* lists in third place.[20] There was little time between February and the departure for the Concilium Germanicum (date of the decree: 21 April); the *Indiculus* was, then, sufficiently up-to-date to be consulted there, and we may conclude that Boniface had compiled it for this purpose.

5 The So-Called Concilium Germanicum of Carloman, Probably at Cologne (First Decree, 21 April 742)

Carloman's first decree represents the first ever extant legislation by a Carolingian. Its prologue states when the decree was drafted, who was invited to the assembly, and what the main objective was:

> In the name of our lord Jesus Christ. I, Carloman, *dux* and *princeps* of the Franks, in the 742nd year since the Incarnation of Christ and the 21st day of April, with the advice of the servants of God and my *optimates*, have brought together out of fear of Christ bishops who are in my realm with priests into a council and synod, namely Archbishop Boniface, Burchard,

18 *Indiculus* 21 and 30: "De lunae defectione quod dicunt uince luna," and "De eo quod credunt quia femine lunam comendet quod possint corda hom(inum) tollere iuxta pagan(os)." Most of the recent accounts consider the details in the *Indiculus* to be divorced from reality, such as James T. Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 407–08, or Marios Costambeys et al., *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge: 2011), 87–90; for a contrasting view, see Benjamin Garstad, "Barbarian Interest in the Excerpta Latina Barbari," *EME* 19, no. 1 (2011), 8–12, 39, 42.

19 After 24 February 742, one had to wait until 13 February 743, see http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov.

20 *Indiculus* 3: *De spurcalibus in febr*(*uario*); on the interpretation in contrast with Candlemas (2 February), see Nathan J. Ristuccia, "The Rise of the Spurcalia: Medieval Festival and Modern Myth", *Comitatus* 44 (2013), 55–76.

> Regenfrid, Witta, Willibald, Dadanus and Eddanus together with their priests, that they might give me their advice on how the law of God and the service of religion, despoiled and fallen into decay under former *principes*, might be re-established, and how the Christian people might attain salvation for their souls and not perish through the deceit of false *sacerdotes*. And, by the advice of my *sacerdotes* and *optimates*, we have appointed bishops for the several cities and have set over them as Archbishop Boniface, who is the legate of St Peter.[21]

The year 742, although unanimously confirmed by the manuscripts, has long been called into doubt. However, as long as the Concilium Germanicum is recognized as the summons and the decree as Carloman's promise, both mentioned by Boniface in his letter to Zachary, then the date of 742 cannot be denied.

This date is supported by the fact that there are only seven bishops mentioned in the decree, and most of them are English. Burchard, Witta, and Willibald had already rallied round Boniface in Thuringia in October 741, so they probably accompanied him in April 742. The same may be true of Dadanus, who is otherwise unattested. Eddanus is generally identified as Heddo of Strasbourg, yet this was also the dominant name amongst the Hedan or Heden family of Main-Franconia and Thuringia, and so it may have simply designated a supporter of Boniface from there. The servants of God who according to the decree had, alongside the *optimates*, advised the holding of the council were obviously prelates from Carloman's circle bent on reform, such as Grimo of Corbie.

The date of 742 is further supported by the fact that Carloman did not yet know which bishops would count as belonging to his realm other than those whom he had already called. Carloman and Pippin had just laid siege to Laon

21 MGH Cap. 1, 24–25 and Conc. 2, 2–3: "In nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi. Ego Karlmannus, dux et princeps Francorum, anno ab incarnatione Christi septingentesimo XLII., XI. Kalendas Maias, cum consilio servorum Dei et optimatum meorum episcopos, qui in regno meo sunt, cum presbiteris et concilium et synodum pro timore Christi congregavi, id est Bonifatium archiepiscopum et Burghardum et Regenfridum et Wintanum (Hwitanum) et Willabaldum et Dadanum et Eddanum cum presbiteris eorum, ut mihi consilium dedissent, quomodo lex Dei et aecclesiastica relegio recuperetur, quae in diebus praeteritorum principum dissipata corruit, et qualiter populus christianus ad salutem animae pervenire possit et per falsos sacerdotes deceptus non pereat. Et per consilium sacerdotum et optimatum meorum ordinavimus per civitates episcopos et constituimus super eos archiepiscopum Bonifatium, qui est missus sancti Petri." The editions include the last sentence in Ch. 1 (no chapter numbers in the manuscripts). Tangl, no. 56, 98–99 prints the passage with spaced-out letters up to *pereat*; the above translation uses Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, 649.

and taken their half-brother Grifo prisoner, but it was not until after the Concilium Germanicum that Carloman and Pippin divided the realm in the Treaty of Vieux-Poitiers.[22] Before that Carloman could gather only "bishops who are in my realm," but not *the* bishops *of* his realm. It was on his way from Laon that Carloman imprisoned Grifo in Chèvremont. Regenfrid, the only bishop who we know for certain did not belong to Boniface's retinue, was bishop of Cologne, and hence the venue of the Concilium, not named in the decree, might well have been Cologne, the gateway to the East.[23]

Perhaps Cologne was already being considered as Boniface's metropole, for Boniface had to reside somewhere if he was to be archbishop over the bishops whom Carloman appointed. Three of them had been selected from among those present at the Concilium: Burchard for Würzburg, Witta for Büraburg, and an unknown person for Erfurt (Dadanus or Eddanus?). Boniface announced these to Zachary and obtained their confirmation.[24]

The following statements of the decree include points by which Boniface set great store, and thus are very likely to have been introduced by him. First of all, Carloman declared that synods should be held every year in his presence, that defrauded estates should be restored to the churches,[25] and that false priests and fornicating deacons and clerics should be removed from the church properties. Furthermore clerics were forbidden to carry arms or fight or join military campaigns; Carloman merely concedes that the *princeps* may have one or two bishops with *capellani presbiteri*, and each *praefectus* one priest, to celebrate mass, carry relics, hear confessions, and prescribe penance.[26] Similarly, clerics are forbidden to hunt with hounds or with hawks and falcons. When the bishop travels through his diocese to administer the sacrament of

22 Heinz Joachim Schüssler, "Die fränkische Reichsteilung von Vieux-Poitiers (742) und die Reform der Kirche in den Teilreichen Karlmanns und Pippins: Zu den Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Bonifatius," *Francia* 13 (1985), 47–112 (with map). See also Andreas Fischer, *Karl Martell: Der Beginn karolingischer Herrschaft* (Stuttgart: 2012), 176–87.

23 Rudolf Schieffer, "Der Bischof zwischen Civitas und Königshof (4. bis 9. Jahrhundert)," in *Der Bischof in seiner Zeit: Bischofstypus und Bischofsideal im Spiegel der Kölner Kirche*. Festgabe für Joseph Kardinal Höffner, Erzbischof von Köln, eds. Peter Berglar and Odilo Engels (Cologne: 1986), 26.

24 In general, see Tangl, no. 51; individually, Tangl, no. 52 to Witta, Tangl, no. 53 to Burchard, and a lost confirmation to the Erfurt bishop. At the time Carloman may also have entrusted Utrecht to Boniface "ad constituendum et ordinandum episcopum," see Tangl, no. 109, 235.

25 MGH Cap. 1, 25 and Conc. 2, 3: "Et fraudatas pecunias aecclesiarum aecclesiis restituimus et reddidimus." The catchword *fraudare* is repeated in his *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum* and in the letter to Æthelbald, Tangl, no. 73, 152.

26 David S. Bachrach, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, c. 300–1215 (Woodbridge: 2003) 39, 43–46.

confirmation, priests must give an account of themselves; and they are obliged to collect the chrism from him on Maundy Thursdays. The command that the bishop should, with the help of the *grafio*, suppress pagan rites among the populace is expressed by two Bonifatian key words: sacrilege and *paganiae.*[27] Mandated from the date of the decree, incarceration and flagellation awaited fornicating priests, clerics, and monks, while nuns guilty of such violations had their heads shaved.[28] Priests and deacons were forbidden to wear clothes in the style worn by laymen and to cohabit with women. Monks and nuns were to live according to the Benedictine Rule.

The decree ends without a closing eschatocol, even in the manuscripts which are most consistently related to Boniface: the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae* in Vatican Pal. lat. 577, and the three main manuscripts that give us the Boniface correspondence. Boniface appears to have been more concerned with substance than with form, and either ordered or approved the seamless connection in the manuscripts between Carloman's first decree and the second one, containing the results of the General Assembly of Estinnes – which of course, can only have happened in or after Estinnes. Ultimately both the style and content of the decree would influence Pippin, as is discussed below.

6 Arguments and Topics: The *Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses*

The *Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses* in Würzburg M. p. th. q. 31 (fols. 52–59)[29] constitute a dossier of canons, extracts from the Church Fathers, and newly formulated texts, some of which also appear in the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae*. A remark about conflicting dates for Easter allows a dating to 740 or 743. Since 743 is preferable due to other resonances in the text, and since Boniface himself dates the start of reform to as late as Carloman's reign, we are probably dealing here with material which Boniface wanted to use in preparing topics and arguments for the general assembly of Estinnes, where he was the principal actor.

The *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum* occur twice in the *Sententiae Wirceburgenses*: once at the start and then again at the end, where they are

27 Also occurring in Boniface's letter to Zachary, Tangl, no. 50, 84–85, and in a sermon which Boniface seems to have given at that time: "quae lingua gallorum pagania uocatur"; see Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 605.

28 Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600–1200* (Cambridge: 2014), 107–08.

29 Digitized at http://vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mpthq31/ueber.html.

supplemented by the complementary *Capitulum de invasoribus monasteriorum*.[30] They discuss laymen and adulterous clerics who appropriate bishoprics or monasteries; in his letter to Zachary Boniface had already complained about greedy laymen und adulterous clerics who exploit episcopal sees for secular uses.[31] The *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum* charge such a man with seven serious sins: he is guilty (1) with regard to the souls who died without baptism; (2–3) with regard to the people, who die without a proper faith, penance, and confirmation; (4) because priests and clergy err without shepherds and teachers and in their error lead the people astray; (5) because he "eats up the sins" (Hosea 4:8) of others who endowed the church for the ransom from their sins; (6) because he who keeps for himself what the poor need to live, murders them; and, finally, (7) worst of all, because he robs the Church that is our mother and he bears guilt for the blood of Christ, out of which the Church is composed, and for all souls which the Church must comfort. Whoever cheats the Church commits sacrilege.

If the *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum* see calamity in the loss of the bishop, the *Capitulum de invasoribus monasteriorum* sees it in the loss of the abbot. At the end of the latter the Book of Hosea, cited previously in the *Capitula*, is quoted once more from Iulianus Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa*. Both the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses* and *Palatinae* include the text of the Pomerian source right before Carloman's decrees. Furthermore, the *Sententiae* augment the Pomerian rubric with a reference to the example of St Martin, the patron saint of the Franks. The exposition in the *Capitula* about Mother Church, the blood of Christ, and sacrilege was taken up again by Boniface in his letters to Æthelbald and Cuthbert, thus revealing Boniface as the author of the *Capitula*.

The *Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses* provide further details in the form of two lists of topics. The first list primarily attacks deficits in the faith and the second focuses on the proprietary church system. Like the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, these consist exclusively of lemmata and begin on fols 54v and 59v (end of the *Sententiae*) after two or three empty lines. They are translated in full here for the first time:

30 August Nürnberger, "Über die Würzburger Handschrift der irischen Canonensammlung," *Archiv für katholisches Kirchenrecht* 60 (1888), 82–84, Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 105–10 and 112–13 (on the basis of altogether twelve transmissions of the *Capitula*); important also is Hermann Schüling, "Die Handbibliothek des Bonifatius: Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der ersten Hälfte des 8. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 4 (1963), 325–27.

31 Tangl, no. 50, 82.

List I[32]

(16) On the different and contradictory times of Easter.
(17) On the confused doctrine and the similar meaning of "bishop" and "priest."
(18) On liquid pork fat.
(19) On their assumption that they can understand Holy Scripture without teachers and treatises.
(20) On their calling the holy writers of treatises Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory "prattlers."[33]
(21) On the heretics Clemens and Aldebert, on schismatics, and on the unity of the Church.
(22) On the Simoniac heresy which they commit by ordinations.
(23) On their claiming that the entire (Holy) Scripture should be understood historically.
(24) On their saying that adulterous bishops and priests are reinstated in their rank.
(25) On the fact that they ordain an adulterous priest as bishop.

32 Nürnberger, "Über die Würzburger Handschrift," 80, and Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 117–18 (with analysis up to page 163 and illustrations at the end of the book): "(16) De diuersis pasce temporibus et contrariis. (17) De confusa doctrina et de simili sensu episcopi praesbiteri. (18) De auxungiis porcorum liquefactis. (19) De eo quod sine magistris, sine tractatu sanctam scripturam intellegere se posse putare. (20) De eo quod sanctos tractatores hieronimum, agustinum, gregorium parabula nominam (correctly nominant). (21) De hereticis clemente uel heldeberthto, de scismaticis et de unitate aeclesiae. (22) De simoniaca heresi quam faciunt per ordinationes. (23) De eo quod dicunt omnem scripturam historialiter debere intellegi. (24) De eo quod dicunt adulteros episcopos uel praesbiteros in gradum reuersos. (25) De eo quod adulterum praesbiterum ordinant episcopum. (26) De pagano ritu rusticorum quos faciunt iuxta sepulcra uel ad aecclesias. (27) De eo quod nullus predicat populus (correctly populo)." See also Sven Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy of Clemens," *Church History* 80 (2011), 262, 280, who edited and translated this first series. Florence Close, "Aldebert et Clément: Deux évêques marginaux sacrifiés à la réforme de l'Église?" in *Compétition et sacré au Haut Moyen Âge: Entre médiation et exclusion*, eds. Philippe Depreux, François Bougard, and Régine Le Jan. Collection Haut Moyen Âge 21 (Turnhout: 2015), 198, n. 22 cites only Meeder and adheres to the forged letter of the *Vita Waltgeri*.

33 *Parabula* = "palaver," prattle; different version in Meeder, "Boniface," 262, 264 and 280. The epilogue to the *Paenitentiale Theodori* (by Boniface or Burchard of Würzburg?) is outraged by the defamation of Jerome as a malicious mouth (*maliloquus*), of Augustine as a prattler (*multiloquus*), of Isidore as a mere compiler of glosses (*glosarum conpositor*); and that Gregory, "our apostle" (i.e., England's), had simply said what others had exposed earlier.

(26) On the pagan rite of simple-minded people which they perform next to graves or at churches.
(27) On no one preaching to the people.[34]

List II[35]

(48) On the devastation caused to their own people during a military campaign.
(49) On the sale of Christian slaves who are set free by the heathens.
(50) On fornicating clerics who hold bishoprics or monasteries.
(51) On clerics who are tonsured by laymen and provided by them with food and drink amongst their attendants against the commandment of God's Church and the customs of all Christian peoples.
(52) On their keeping of attendants in the manorial villages and in their churches without the law of God and the agreement of the bishops and on their choosing those attendants for their teachers (2 Timothy 4:3) and that the people there are for the most part baptized in heretical beliefs.
(53) On adulterous and fornicating clerics who stand armed in the battle line.
(54) On the fact that no Christian people in the entire world commit such monstrous iniquity against God's Church and the monasteries or bear such grievous guilt as the people of the Franks, neither in Greece nor in Italy nor in Britain nor in Africa nor among any other Christian people.

34 Different view in Meeder, "Boniface," 262. The problem is connected to item (51) and (52), as the letter Tangl, no. 80, 175–76 suggests.

35 Nürnberger, "Über die Würzburger Handschrift," 84, and Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 118: "(48) De uastatione proprii populi in exercitu. (49) De uenditione christianorum mancipiorum, que pagani relaxant ingenuatua (correctly ingenuata). (50) De clericis fornicatoribus qui episcopatu (correctly episcopatus = episcopatos) uel monasteria tenent. (51) De clericis quos laici tondunt et sub se nutriunt inter suos pueros contra praeceptum aeclesiarum dei et contra mores omnium christianorum populorum. (52) De eo quod pueri (correctly pueros) per uicos dominicos uel per suas aecclesias detenent sine dei lege et sine consilio episcoporum et elegunt sibi magistros et ibi in errore baptizatur populus maxima ex parte. (53) De clericis adulteris et fornicatoris (correctly fornicatoribus) armatis in acie stantibus. (54) De eo quod nulla gens christiana in toto mundo contra aeclesiam dei et monasteria tam inmane scelus et tam graue peccatum habet quam gens francorum, nec in grecia nec in italia nec in brittania nec in affrica nec in ulla gente christianorum."

Like the date of Easter (16) and the sale of Christian slaves (49), which will be prohibited by the decree at Estinnes, mention of the two heretics Clement and Aldebert (21) permits a plausible dating. It is striking that Clement is named first and that further lemmata reflect Clement's, and not Aldebert's, doctrine (19, 20, 23). As we know from letters to and from Boniface, he had "come upon the two pseudo-prophets in the province of the Franks," and Carloman was summoned to arrest the "Scot" Clement.[36] Aldebert, who was "a Gaul by birth," troubled Pippin in Soissons, so his activities in Neustria must have crossed borders.[37] On 22 June 744 (or 743) Zachary praised their condemnation, of which he had been informed in August 743 (or earlier).[38] This date suggests that the "sacerdotal council and synodal assembly in the province of the Franks," mentioned by Boniface,[39] was the assembly of Estinnes, prepared by Boniface with the help of the *Sententiae Wirceburgenses*.

7 The General Assembly of Carloman at Estinnes (Second Decree, 1 March 743)

Estinnes is, indeed, presented by the second decree as a "synodal assembly." Dating it with its year must have seemed superfluous since the second decree confirms the first, which had stipulated annual councils. The rubric and the introduction both enmesh the second decree with the first:[40]

> About the other synodal assembly.
> And now, in this synodal assembly, called for the first day of March in the place called Estinnes, all the venerable bishops of God,[41] the counts

36 Tangl, no. 57, 104–05 and Tangl, no. 59, 110–12. The epilogue to the *Paenitentiale Theodori* and the sermon "Rogamus uos" in the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae* seem to react to Clement.

37 According to the *Vita quarta* Aldebert was finally condemned by "Charles the Elder" (i.e., Carloman) and fled from Fulda.

38 Tangl, no. 57, together with the requests for *pallia*. Meeder, "Boniface," 253–54 and John Charles Arnold, "The Containment of Angels: Boniface, Aldebert, and the Roman Synod of 745," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 17 (2012), 216 follow the earlier dating of the papal letter by Paul Speck.

39 Tangl, no. 59, 110, read out 745 at the Roman council against Clement and Aldebert.

40 MGH Cap. 1, 27, Conc. 2, 6–7, following the letter collection Tangl, no. 56, 101: "DE ALIO SYNODALI CONVENTU. Modo autem in hoc synodali conventu, qui congregatus est ad Kalendas Martias in loco, qui dicitur Liftinas, omnes venerabiles sacerdotes Dei et comites et praefecti prioris synodus decreta consentientes firmaverunt, se inplere velle et observare promiserunt." Translated using Murray, *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul*, 651.

41 About 20 dioceses must have been represented: 13 from Rouen to Strasbourg as in Tangl, no. 82, plus 4–5 located in-between can be added to this, as well as Büraburg, Erfurt, and Utrecht.

> and prefects have accepted and confirmed the decrees of the former synod and have promised to carry them out and observe them.

Hereafter, the entire clergy is said to have promised to observe canon law, and abbots and monks promised to accept the Benedictine Rule. Some words recall Boniface,[42] while Carloman's own voice is not heard until specific regulations are offered.[43] In the first of these regulations fornicating and adulterous clerics who have defiled the holy places and monasteries are expelled and made to do penance. Obviously, Boniface's *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum* and his *Capitulum de invasoribus monasteriorum* had been convincing. The second regulation contradicts the declaration of the previous year about returning defrauded estates to the churches; now, in view of imminent wars, a portion is retained for the benefit of the army. Whoever has received church land as precarial tenure (*precarium*)[44] by order of the *princeps* must pay an annual rent (*census*) of one *solidus* for each homestead (*casata*).[45] If poverty is compelling, the full possession is restored. The third regulation states that adultery and incestuous marriages are to be corrected by the bishops.[46] Moreover, as prompted by Boniface's *Sententiae Wirceburgenses*, the sale of Christian slaves to heathens is forbidden. The regulations end on the renewal of the antipagan decree

42 *Modo autem* already in Tangl, no. 50, 82; also *promisit*, *vellet*, and *implere*.

43 Now the verbs of disposition *Statuimus* and *Decrevimus* are repeated from the first decree. Matthew Innes, "'Immune from Heresy': Defining the boundaries of Carolingian Christianity," in *Frankland: The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages*. Essays in honour of Dame Jinty Nelson, eds. Paul Fouracre and David Ganz (Manchester: 2008), 105; James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 19 (Turnhout: 2009), 185, 196; and idem, "Computus after the Paschal Controversy of AD 740," in *The Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Its Manuscripts, Texts, and Tables*, eds. Immo Warntjes and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín. Studia traditionis theologiae 10 (Turnhout: 2011), 237, assign Estinnes to Pippin.

44 *Precarium* here is the involuntary lending of church estates, involving many homesteads; see Hans Josef Hummer, *Politics and Power in Early Medieval Europe: Alsace and the Frankish Realm, 600–1000*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series 65 (Cambridge: 2005), 76–81.

45 Confirmed by Zachary, in Tangl, no. 60, 123: "ab unoquoque coniugio servorum XII denarii reddantur."

46 Probably implemented by the episcopal sermon against illicit marriages (*Alloquutio sacerdotum de coniugiis inlicitis ad plebem*) in the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae*; my attribution to Boniface has been taken up by Rob Meens, "Aspekte der Christianisierung des Volkes," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 214, and idem, "With One Foot in the Font: The Failed Baptism of the Frisian King Radbod and the 8th-Century Discussion about the Fate of Unbaptized Forefathers," in *Early Medieval Ireland and Europe: Chronology, Contacts, Scholarship. A Festschrift for Dáibhí Ó Cróinín*, eds. Pádraic Moran and Immo Warntjes. Studia Traditionis Theologiae 14 (Turnhout: 2015), 584–85, and Ubl, *Inzestverbot und Gesetzgebung. Die Konstruktion eines Verbrechens (300–1100)*. Millennium-Studien 20 (Berlin and New York: 2008), 244–45.

of "my father" on which Boniface had collaborated. In formal terms, the first person singular (*pater meus*) reprises the beginning of the first decree (*Ego Carlmannus*). Yet an eschatocol is missing.

Additionally, important personnel decisions must have been pre-empted or confirmed by Estinnes without being mentioned by the decree.

In August 743 (or earlier) Boniface reported to Zachary on Carloman's council and mentioned that he had ordained three archbishops in the particular metropoles for which he, Carloman, and Pippin had requested *pallia*: Grimo in Rouen, Abel in Reims, and Hartbert in Sens.[47] Rouen belonged to Carloman's part of the realm, Reims and Sens to Pippin's. Counting Boniface, two archbishops were thus envisaged for each part. Grimo may have been designated in Estinnes, and he probably brought from Corbie the slender *Collectio Dionysiana prima* (without decretals) as a model of the canons, which the clergy in Estinnes promised to observe.[48]

As for Boniface's see, negotiations about Cologne, confirmed by Zachary on 31 October 745,[49] must have taken place in Estinnes, if not already at the Concilium Germanicum. In the end, the plan to make Boniface the metropolitan of Cologne was thwarted when Agilolf became bishop there.[50] The see of Mainz, however, was vacant since Bishop Gewilib had been deposed, most probably by a provincial synod in autumn 743, for carrying out a blood feud on the river Werra. Boniface had already been supervising the bishopric of Mainz since Gewilib's deposition, and he was ultimately compelled to make do with Mainz as his see. Furthermore, it was probably in Estinnes that Boniface condemned the dubious bishops Aldebert and Clement as "the servants and forerunners of Antichrist" and put them in custody.[51]

As thanks for Boniface's commitment Carloman may have issued the deed of donation for the new monastery on the river Fulda, a community planned as a shining model for the Benedictine Rule that abbots and monks had accepted in Estinnes.[52]

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47 Tangl, no. 57 (see above p. 232) and no. 58, where on page 106 Boniface's letter *per elapsum Augustum mensem* is mentioned; Schüssler, "Die fränkische Reichsteilung," 92–93, n. 272.

48 The use of that *Collectio* in Estinnes is supported by its transmission immediately following the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae*. Grimo springs to mind, since an old extract was also preserved at Corbie (appendix to the *Collectio Corbeiensis*).

49 Tangl, no. 60, 121–22.

50 Tangl, no. 80, 179–80; Agilolf: Tangl, no. 82, 182. Lull may be referring to him in Tangl, no. 92, 211, and note 4.

51 Tangl, no. 57, 104–05.

52 Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c.744–c.900*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series 83 (Cambridge: 2012), 36–37; for Estinnes, see Edmund Ernst Stengel, *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda 1: Die Zeit der*

8 The General Assembly of Pippin at Soissons (Decree, 3 March 744)

Pippin's decree has been preserved in two collections of material not related to Boniface. In the *Collectio canonum Bellovacensis* of Vatican lat. 3827, the decrees of Ver (755) and Soissons (744) continue the old Gallic dossier. Ver and Soissons also enrich the small collection of Pippin's decrees which begins the major *Collectio capitularium* of Vatican Pal. lat. 582 and Paris lat. 9654.[53] Both are copies from the same archetype, as confirmed by their common features, which are missing from other transmissions of Ver.

It is striking that in form, style, and content, Pippin's decree from Soissons imitates those of Carloman. The *invocatio* is followed by the same manner of dating in accordance with the year of the Incarnation and by the same *intitulatio*: "I (*ego*) Pippin *dux* and *princeps* of the Franks." Next, Pippin names the location and explains the character of the assembly:

> As is not unknown to many that we have decided in the name of God with the consent of the bishops and the counsel of the priests and servants of God and for discussion with the counts and *optimates* of the Franks to hold a synod and council in the city of Soissons.[54]

Pippin obviously set store by a good understanding with the lay elite. Their importance is confirmed by the *sanctio*, which sets a secular punishment for

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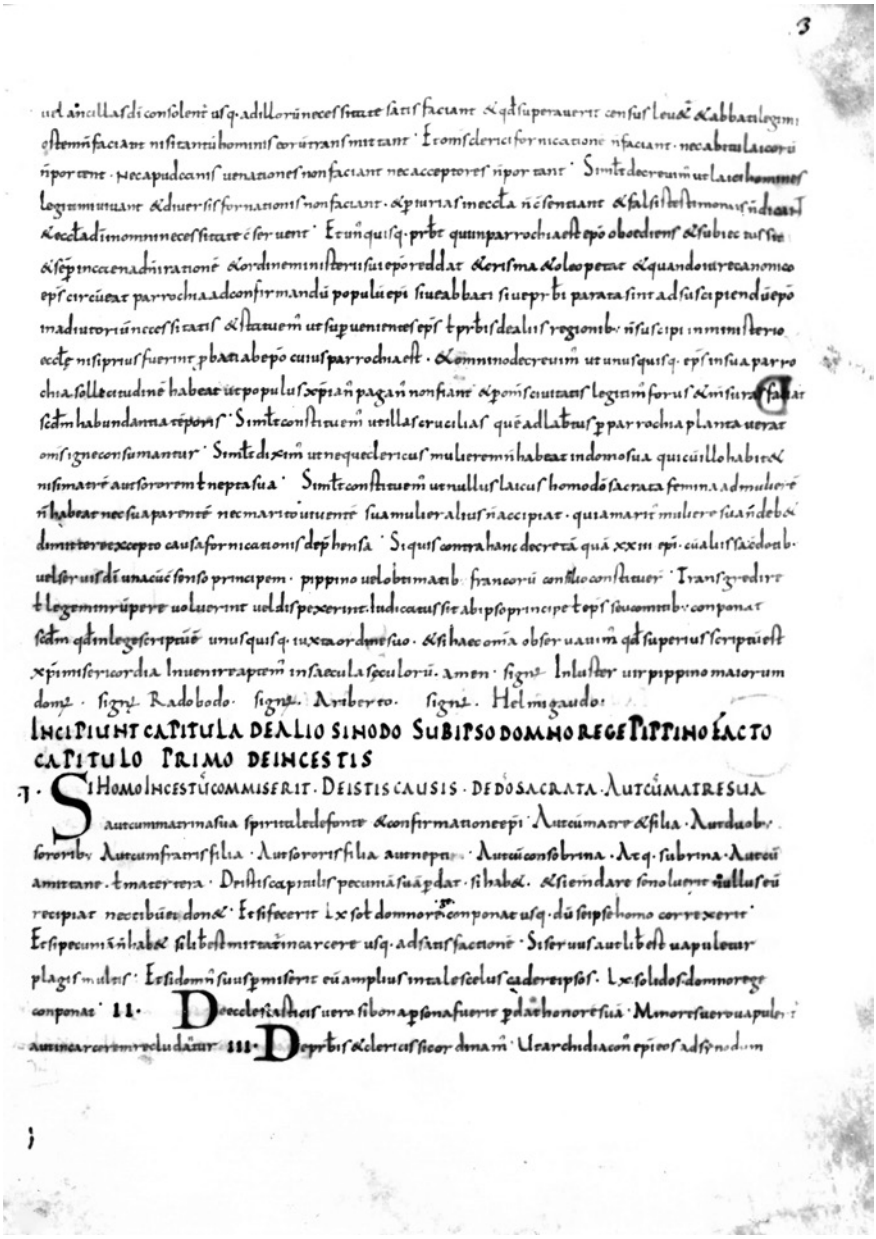
Äbte Sturmi und Baugulf. Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 10.1 (Marburg: 1958), 1–6.

53 Vatican lat. 3827 (digitalized at http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3827) is to be preferred to the corrected version in Vatican Pal. lat. 582 and Paris lat. 9654. It includes the phase of the moon corresponding to the day's date *V* (3 March) instead of *VI* in the other manuscripts (2 March), something which Brigitte Englisch, *Zeiterfassung und Kalenderprogrammatik in der frühen Karolingerzeit: Das Kalendarium der Hs. Köln DB 83–2 und die Synode von Soissons 744*, Instrumenta 8 (Stuttgart: 2002), 85–96 does not discuss, despite far-reaching conclusions; on the manuscripts see Hubert Mordek, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum manuscripta: Überlieferung und Traditionszusammenhang der fränkischen Herrschererlasse*, MGH Hilfsmittel 15 (Munich: 1995).

54 MGH Cap. 1, 29, Conc. 2, 33: "…ego Pippinus, dux et princeps Francorum. Dum plures non habetur incognitum, qualiter nos in Dei nomine una cum consensu episcoporum sive sacerdotum vel servorum Dei consilio seu comitibus et obtimatibus Francorum conloqui apud Suessionis civitas synodum vel concilio facere decrevimus." The place is somewhat differently translated by Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. Fourth Series 101 (Cambridge: 2015), 306.



INCIPIUNT CAPITULA DE ALIO SINODO SUB IPSO DOMNO REGE PIPPINO FACTO

CAPITULO PRIMO DE INCESTIS

ILLUSTRATION 10.1 *Decree of Soissons: Sanctio* with mention of the 23 bishops and the signa of Pippin and three high-ranking laymen, and rubric of Pippin's royal capitulary. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3827, fol. 39r, (formerly fol. 3r), 9th century

each breach of the resolutions, which are in turn described using the words "decree" and "law":[55]

> Should someone be in violation of this decree, which twenty-three bishops as well as other *sacerdotes* and servants of God issued with the approval of the *princeps* Pippin and the advice of the *optimates* of the Franks, or should he break or disregard the law, then let him be judged by the *princeps* himself or the bishops and the counts and pay according to what stands written in the law, each commensurate with his status.

A concluding blessing is followed by the *signum* and name of Pippin and three other laymen: Radobod, Aribert, and Helmigaud. As we can deduce from comparable documents, they seem to be the modest remnants of an originally much more comprehensive list which included bishops as well. Pippin had already named the same number of bishops in the first chapter of the decree: twenty-three bishops publicly condemned Aldebert's heresy. This roughly corresponds to the number of bishops remaining in Neustria and Austrasia after Carloman's known bishoprics have been deducted. Only Abel and Hartbert, the new archbishops of Reims and Sens, were announced by name.

That Boniface was present at Pippin's Assembly at Soissons is suggested not only by his absence from the entry of the monks into Fulda (12 March 744) and his appointment as legate in the whole province of Gaul, but also by fact that the decree of Soissons borrows from Carloman's decrees, the first of which, particularly influenced by Boniface, is even quoted verbatim in the first four chapters of the decree of Soissons.

Some points, however, are watered down: monks and nuns should lead a life of *stabilitas* according to the "Holy Rule" (instead of specifying the Benedictine Rule); monasteries (not churches) will have restored to them a minimum number of withdrawn estates and receive a rent (*census*) from the rest; legitimate abbots (not the clergy as a whole) are forbidden to go to war (although they may provide contingents); celibacy is impressed upon clerics (although they are not threatened with degradation and penance); external bishops and priests are to be scrutinized by the local bishop (not the synod); and clerics are not permitted to cohabit with a woman (except their mother, sister, or niece/aunt). Only a short sentence remains about the struggle against pagan practices.

55 MGH Cap. 1, 30, Conc. 2, 36: "Si quis contra hanc decretam, quam XXIII episcopi cum aliis sacerdotibus vel servis Dei una cum consenso principem Pippino vel obtimatibus Francorum consilio constituerunt, transgredire vel legem inrumpere voluerint vel dispexerint, iudicatus sit ab ipso principe vel episcopis seu comitibus, conponat secundum quod in lege scriptum est, unusquisque iuxta ordine suo."

There are also some new themes in Pippin's decree. Lay people are to live honestly and without fornication; should not engage in perjury in church; should not give false witness; and should keep churches in good condition.[56] Bishops should establish legitimate markets in their cities and measures according to the time of year. All field crosses erected by Aldebert are to be burnt. A lay man may take neither a nun nor a relative as his wife, and his marriage may only be dissolved in the case of proven fornication. This recalls a prominent case about which Boniface had complained in 742,[57] but also points forward to the marriage legislation enacted by Pippin in the period after Boniface.

9 Further Synods, Letters to England, the Council of Clofesho (747) and the Privilege of Gumley (749)

It is important to emphasize that the only councils for which authentic documents have been preserved are those hitherto discussed, namely those of 742, 743, and 744. While Carloman and Pippin declared they would hold annual councils, these councils may have adapted the former resolutions rather than drafted new ones.[58] Councils of the whole of the Frankish realm are, in any case, unlikely. In 747/748, after Carloman's abdication, the self-evident assumption was separate "synods" for Pippin and Drogo, Carloman's son.[59] It was not until 748, after Drogo had been ousted, that synods for the entire reunited realm convened.

Nonetheless, an indirect comment by Zachary on 31 October 745 (to Boniface)[60] and a vague comment by Boniface before September 747 (to Cuthbert of Canterbury) led scholars to deduce that councils for the whole realm took place in 744/745 and 747.[61] The last warrants further discussion. In his letter to

56 The first point (*legitimi vivant et diversis fornicationis non faciant*) resembles Estinnes (*adulteria*) and is directed against forms of concubinage or dissolute bachelors such as Æthelbald of Mercia, Tangl, no. 73 and no. 75.

57 Tangl, no. 50, 83–84, with all three objections against the bride: related, divorced, nun.

58 This point has been vigorously advanced by Jörg Jarnut, "Bonifatius und die fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743–748)," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung* 66 (1979), 1–26.

59 Tangl, no. 79, 172. Ludger Körntgen has kindly reminded me that Zachary's letter Tangl, no. 77, which alludes to a planned council of Pippin, is dated in 748, not 747 (5 January).

60 Tangl, no. 60, 121: "De synodo autem congregato apud Francorum provinciam mediantibus Pippino et Carlomanno…" There follow questions that were either certainly or probably discussed in Estinnes and Soissons.

61 747 listed as No. 6 in MGH Conc. 2, 45–50; See the new chronology proposed by Heinrich Wagner, *Bonifatiusstudien*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Bistums und Hochstifts Würzburg 60 (Würzburg: 2003), 156–65.

Cuthbert, Boniface recounts what he and the bishops had resolved at "our synodal assembly":[62] to maintain the Catholic faith and unity and the subjection to the Roman Church; to hold a synod every year; that the metropolitan bishops shall ask for their *pallia*; and to obey the orders of St Peter. The declaration was signed and forwarded to Rome and, since on 1 May 748 Zachary thanks not only Boniface but also the bishops whose names and sees are taken from the declaration,[63] we know they are bishops who represented Carloman's part of the realm, not Pippin's.[64]

In the rest of the letter, Boniface outlines regulations which largely follow the first decree of Carloman.[65] Possibly the paraphrase was based on an independent version, for Charlemagne will combine them in a chapter whose wording seems older than that approved in Estinnes.[66] The supremacy of the metropolitan bishops was highlighted by Boniface because it was relevant to his colleague Cuthbert. However, in that part of the letter nothing supports a new synod for the entire realm, indication of which scholars claim to find in the following part:

> I have undertaken to bring together and to instruct the synod of this (Catholic Church), by command of the Roman pontiff and at the request of the *principes* of the Franks and the Gauls, in the hope of reconstructing the law of Christ. I have dug the ground round about, I have enriched it with manure, but I have not guarded it. While I waited for it to bear grapes, it brought forth wild grapes.[67]

But a complaint about "wild grapes" can only come after years of waiting for a fruitful harvest.

Towards the end of the letter to Cuthbert, Boniface returns to the phrasing of the *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum*:

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62 Tangl, no. 78, 163: "Decrevimus autem in nostro sinodali conventu…"; transl. Emerton, no. 62, 115; on the pallia see Steven A. Schoenig, *Bonds of Wool: The Pallium and Papal Power in the Middle Ages*, Sudies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law 15 (Washington, DC: 2016), 31–32, 38, 75, 85, 144, 160..

63 Tangl, no. 80, 178 and no. 82, 182–84.

64 Schüssler, "Die fränkische Reichsteilung," *passim*.

65 Tangl, no. 78, 163–64: "Statuimus, ut per annos singulos…"; transl. Emerton, no. 62, 115–16.

66 This is the capitulary *Apostolicae sedis hortatu*, discussed below on p. 244.

67 Tangl, no. 78, 165: "Cuius (of the ęcclesia catholica) synodum congregandam et hortandam iussu pontificis Romani et rogatu principum Francorum et Gallorum sub spę restaurandę legis Christi suscepi. Circumfodi, cofinum stercoris adportavi, set non custodivi. Cum exspectarem, ut faceret uvas, fecit autem labruscas." Translated using Emerton, no. 62, 116.

> Any layman, whether imperator or king, or one of his prefects and counts, who violently seizes a monastery from the power of a bishop or abbot or abbess and starts to rule there and hold property bought by the blood of Christ, is called a robber and sacrilegious, a murderer of the poor by the ancient fathers.[68]

Similar links to the *Capitula* become even clearer in the warning letter addressed by Boniface and seven bishops of Anglo-Saxon origin to King Æthelbald of Mercia. The lay man and adulterous cleric mentioned in the *Capitula*, just like the lay man endowed with secular power mentioned in the letter to Cuthbert, are threatened with the punishment of eternal damnation. Vividly, the letter reminds Æthelbald of the terrible suffering of Ceolred of Mercia, of Osred of Northumbria and, in the English transmission, of Charles Martel, before they died.[69]

Both Boniface letters assisted the Southumbrian council in Clofesho (early September 747).[70] Twelve bishops from eight kingdoms attended, but Æthelbald was also there with his retinue.[71] Zachary had sent two letters to England, probably not without prior consultation with Boniface, which were read out and translated. The list of thirty approved canons reveals an ambitious programme which met with success in Mercia, where barely two years later Æthelbald issued the Privilege of Gumley (749, before September).[72] This privilege freed monasteries and churches to a large extent from the labours that Boniface, in the letter to Æthelbald and in the English transmission of his letter to Cuthbert, attacked as unheard-of violence and servitude.[73]

Copied between the documents from Clofesho (747) and Gumley (749), the English transmission of Boniface's letter to Cuthbert constitutes the core of the

68 Abbreviated from Tangl, no. 78, 169–70 following Emerton, no. 62, 118, and John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: 2005), 112.

69 Tangl, no. 73, 152–53, discussion of Charles Martel on page 153, lines 25–28; see Timothy Reuter, "'Kirchenreform' und 'Kirchenpolitik' im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, eds. Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn, and Michael Richter. Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen: 1994), 51–58. Tangl, 153 calls it the "Yorker Überlieferung," though I argue in *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg*, 65–67 for Worcester, not York.

70 Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c.650–c.850* (London and New York: 1995), 99–110.

71 Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 3 (Oxford: 1871), 362–76.

72 Walter de Gray Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum: A Collection of Charters relating to Anglo-Saxon History*, vol. 1 (London: 1885), 254–56.

73 Tangl, no. 73, 152, lines 13–15 and no. 78, 171, lines 22–26.

Collectio Cottoniana in London Cotton Otho A. I (damaged).[74] Following these three documents are revised excerpts from Gregory's *Regula pastoralis*, also cited in Boniface's letter to Cuthbert.[75] Such a compact compilation was probably produced shortly after the youngest item in the collection, the Privilege of Gumley. That points to Lichfield as the origin of the *Cottoniana*, for Hwita of Lichfield was the first to sign Gumley.

Given that origin, it is not surprising that the *Cottoniana* omits Boniface's compromising letter to Æthelbald. The influence of the English transmission of that letter can be seen for the first time in the *Life* of Ecgwine, whose successor Milred of Worcester (who had attended Clofesho) venerated Boniface. However, William of Malmesbury was the first to use this transmission in greater detail. There, in neighbouring Wessex, Æthelbald did not enjoy a good reputation. The account of a vision preserved by Lull locates the "tyrant" Æthelbald in Purgatory, among children who had died unbaptized under Boniface's former bishop Daniel of Winchester.[76] This appears to allude to the repercussions of the wars that Æthelbald had waged against Cuthred, King of Wessex (since 739/740), and recalls the first of the seven burdens of guilt in Boniface's *Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum*. In 744/745 Daniel had withdrawn to Malmesbury. Lull, as an alumnus, also retained links to Malmesbury; and King Cuthred was in a prayer confraternity with Boniface.[77] From this it can be concluded that Boniface had received complaints about Æthelbald from Wessex, his home country, and felt personally impelled to intervene.

10 Boniface and King Pippin

Recent scholarship has cast doubt on the traditional picture of Pippin's elevation to the status of first Carolingian king in autumn 751. Sometimes it is the request to Zachary that is disputed, sometimes the anointing of Pippin.[78] This

74 Simon Keynes, "The Reconstruction of a Burnt Cottonian Manuscript: The Case of Cotton MS. Otho A.I.," *The British Library Journal* 22 (1996), 113–60, with a plate showing the fragment Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. Selden. B. 26, fol. 34.

75 Tangl, no. 78, 169.

76 Tangl, no. 115, 249 (from Ms. Vienna 751).

77 Evident from the renewal by Lull and King Cynewulf in Tangl, no. 139.

78 For contrasting perspectives on these issues, see Jürgen Strothmann, "Das Königtum Pippins als Königtum der Familie und die Bedeutung der Clausula de unctione Pippini," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Germanistische Abteilung* 125 (2008), 411–29, and Florence Close, "Le sacre de Pépin de 751?: Coulisses d'un coup d'État," in *Les relations diplomatiques au Moyen Âge: Formes et enjeux*. Société des historiens médiévistes

dispute exists because of the silence in contemporary letters, and because of some historians' distrust of Carolingian historiography. In this case, the *Annales regni Francorum* announce that, after a positive reply from Zachary, Pippin was anointed by Boniface in Soissons, while the *Continuatio Fredegarii* and the *Clausula de unctione Pippini* speak of a *consecratio* or anointing by the bishops. It can be assumed that the bishops in the realm, of whom Boniface was the highest-ranking, participated in the elevation of Pippin and celebrated it liturgically, and it stands to reason that on this occasion Pippin was indeed anointed, as he and his sons were anointed by Stephen II in Saint-Denis three years later.

Soon after the elevation, Pippin apparently took up one of Boniface's central concerns. In Soissons 744 the restitution of some of the appropriated estates and compensation for the others through payment of rent had been restricted to monasteries. Now, a note in the *Annales regni Francorum* says that Pippin, urged by Boniface, restored half or one third of the estates to some bishoprics.[79] In addition, the Murbach Annals tell us that church estates had been described and divided.[80] Such changes necessitated consultation with an assembly. It may have been the same synod at which Boniface was present and Pippin, having asked Zachary (d. 15. March 752), is reported to have obtained the permission to appoint bishops. The information is credible since it is related, although a century later, by a conscientious former student of Fulda, Lupus of Ferrières.[81]

In the end, Boniface knew how to put his house in order. He successfully persuaded Pippin to name Lull as deputy and successor in Mainz.[82] Boniface also fought for Utrecht, which in the meantime was being claimed by Cologne. Pippin helped here as well.[83] It is on Utrecht's behalf that we see Boniface active one last time before he and his companions were slain (5 June 754). He

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de l'Enseignement supérieur public. Histoire ancienne et médiévale 108 (Paris: 2011), 835–52.

79 MGH SRG 6, 10.

80 Walter Lendi, *Untersuchungen zur frühalemannischen Annalistik: Die Murbacher Annalen*, Scrinium Friburgense 1 (Freiburg Schweiz: 1971), 152–53.

81 This letter was written in the name of Archbishop Wenilo of Sens and Count Gerhard (849/850) to Archbishop Amulo of Lyon; Léon Levillain, *Loup de Ferrières: Correspondance* 1 (Paris: 1964), 126. For the date of the letter, see Michael Glatthaar, "Bernard von Réome und die Datierung der Musica disciplina Aurelians," *Revue bénédictine* 121, no. 2 (2011), 357–81. A new edition is currently being prepared by Michael I. Allen.

82 Tangl, no. 93, 212–14.

83 MGH DD Kar. 1, nos. 4 and 5; letter to Stephen II: Tangl, no. 109.

probably intended to appear in Saint-Denis seven-and-a-half weeks later,[84] to be present at Pippin's anointment on 28 July. The massacre in Dokkum thwarted this and other plans.

Not long after Boniface's death, Pippin resumed moving forward with their agenda. Before November 751 Boniface had been compelled to put Zachary off with the statement that the question of the archbishops and the *pallia* was still being discussed and postponed,[85] but by 755 the decree of Ver (11 July 755) proclaimed an interim solution:

1. That bishops have to be in the several cities.
2. That the other bishops in all things have to obey the bishops, whom we have installed as vice metropolitans, until in the future we emend the situation more completely according to canon institution.[86]

Pippin was happy to seize on those points which Carloman's first decree had introduced at the very beginning, and which Pippin himself had picked up already in Soissons.

Obviously it was also at Ver that Pippin obliged precarists to maintain church buildings and introduced a new form of rent calculated according to the rural revenues of the tenures: ninth and tenth, or double tenth.[87] Boniface, who had agreed to the compromise of Estinnes,[88] would have been more willing to accept the new obligations of precarists.

It is popular to assert that after the brief zenith of his influence, from 742 to 744, Boniface lost influence once more. Pippin's policies, which aimed at greater independence, seem to be an important reason for this. On the other hand, Boniface always understood how to work as part of a team and to factor in political constraints. That Frankish reformers such as Grimo went along with him, and that new figures such as Chrodegang of Metz or Fulrad of Saint-Denis

84 It is somewhat surpising, however, that Boniface was not at Brétigny near Quierzy (ca. April), where Stephen II answered questions from Gallic bishops; Karl Ubl, "Der lange Schatten des Bonifatius: Die Responsa Stephans II. aus dem Jahr 754 und das fränkische Kirchenrecht," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 63 (2007), 403–49.

85 Tangl, no. 86, 193.

86 MGH Cap. 1, 33, for a more reliable version, see Glatthaar, "Das Konzilsdekret von Ver (755): Ausdruck eines neuen Regierungsstils," in *Pippin der Jüngere und die Erneuerung des Frankenreichs*, eds. Patrick Breternitz and Karl Ubl (forthcoming): "I. Ut episcopi debeant per singulas civitates esse. II. Episcopos, quos in vicem metropolitanorum constituimus, ut ceteri episcopi ipsis in omnibus oboediant, interim quod [in]antea secundum canonicam institutionem hoc plenius emendamus."

87 Glatthaar, *Bonifatius* 337, revised dating in "Das Konzilsdekret von Ver."

88 Once again sanctioned by Zachary, Tangl, no. 87, 199 (before 4 November 751): "De censu autem ęcclesiarum, id est solidum de cassata suscipe et nullam habeas esitationem…"

were coming to the fore, may have been welcomed by the aging Boniface, who longed for greater peace.

11 Conclusion

Essential goals of Boniface's reform were achieved. Under Pippin and Charlemagne, councils, whether regional or central, were held much more frequently. The metropolitan structure was revived and Boniface's insistence on requesting *pallia* in Rome finally bore fruit. This, and much more, strengthened the new ties to the papacy. Laymen rapidly disappeared from the picture as administrators and beneficiaries of bishoprics. Step by step the discipline of the clergy improved, but so too, as a result of better education, did the level of pastoral care and literacy, something Charlemagne saw as in keeping with the tradition of Boniface.[89] The compromise on *precaria* stayed in place for the entire Carolingian period and became a catalyst for the developing feudal system. Much the same is true for the balance of interests in the case of proprietary churches and proprietary monasteries.

Boniface's influence can be seen in Charlemagne's reaction to grave reproaches voiced by northern Italians about the presence of armed bishops in his retinue when he returned from Rome in 787. Asked by Charlemagne, Hadrian I also reacted with disapproval. Charlemagne subsequently issued the capitulary *Apostolicae sedis hortatu*, which cites resolutions from Carloman's first decree alongside further texts by Boniface.[90]

Of course, the higher clergy's entanglement in imperial structures continued to be troublesome and came under criticism during the reign of Louis the Pious. The forged capitularies of Benedictus Levita attacking secular incursion of church independence used the "synod of St Boniface under Carloman" as their introductory source, prefaced only by Zachary's comment which railed against the clergy doing military service. The related pseudo-Isidorian decretals more than once cite the reproach of sacrilege levied by Boniface against Æthelbald, albeit under the pseudonym of the ancient popes Anaklet and Lucius.[91] Scarcely any other text by Boniface has been used more, not only in

89 Charlemagne's letter to Lull, written by Paul the Deacon, MGH Epp. 4, 532, lines 25–26; see Glatthaar, "Zur Datierung der Epistola generalis Karls des Großen," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 66 (2010), 462–63.

90 MGH Cap. 1, 44–46, see my introduction to MGH Fontes iuris 16, 5–7.

91 Glatthaar, *Bonifatius*, 358–59; on the complexity of the forgeries, see Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Fälschung als Mittel politischer Auseinandersetzuung: Ludwig der Fromme (814–840) und die Genese der pseudoisidorischen Dekretalen* (Paderborn: 2011), and Karl Ubl and Daniel

literature but also in politics. Striking examples are found in the *Collectio de raptoribus* by Hincmar of Reims, and in the legal treatise that was to initiate the Coblenz decree of immunity and sacrilege (922). Boniface's reforms continued to be influential and would be called upon time and again to renew the Church from within and to help assert its position in the outside world.

Chronological survey of Boniface's activity at councils

737–738	Sojourn in Rome. Gregory III appoints Boniface as Legate and thereby his representative at councils
ca. 739	Boniface obtains the anti-pagan decree of Charles Martel Organization of the Bavarian bishoprics under Odilo (provincial assembly)
740	Council on the banks of the Danube (probably Regensburg, planned after 29 October 739)
741	Boniface consecrates Willibald of Eichstätt as bishop, assisted by Burchard and Witta in Sülzenbrücken (21/22 October)
742	Draft of the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, obviously composed for the Concilium Germanicum Concilium Germanicum: Carloman's consultation with Boniface and six other bishops, probably in Cologne (decree of 21 April) Foundation of the dioceses of Würzburg, Büraburg and Erfurt Report in Boniface's letter of welcome to the new Pope Zachary
742/743	Compilation of the *Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses*, for the assembly at Estinnes
743	Council and general assembly of Carloman at Estinnes (decree of 1 March) Requests for the *pallia* of three Frankish metropolitan bishops: Grimo in Rouen, Abel in Reims, and Hartbert in Sens; Cologne was envisaged as the metropole for Boniface
744	Council and general assembly of Pippin at Soissons (decree of 3 March) Estinnes and Soissons each stipulate annual councils, but a council for the entire realm remains unlikely
745	Roman council where a letter and other materials from Boniface were read aloud (record of 5 November)

Ziemann (eds.), *Fälschung als Mittel der Politik?: Pseudoisidor im Licht der neuen Forschung,* MGH Studien und Texte 57 (Wiesbaden: 2015).

Chronological survey of Boniface's activity at councils

747	Last council of Carloman's bishops with declaration of obedience to Pope Zachary, known from his answers to Boniface (1 May 748) and the other bishops (also mentioned below in the letter to Cuthbert)
	Boniface and seven further English bishops in the Frankish realm admonish King Æthelbald of Mercia
	Boniface informs Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury about the new resolutions of a Frankish council (declaration of obedience as above), and about old resolutions from 742–744, or about renewals of them.
	Southumbrian council of Clofesho (early September), influenced by Boniface's letters to Æthelbald and Cuthbert
	Abdication of Carloman
747/748	Separate synods of Pippin and Drogo (planned)
	Zachary asks that Boniface be invited to a council of Pippin (planned)
748	Pippin's assembly of the entire realm in Düren
749	Urged by Boniface and Clofesho: Æthelbald's monastery and church privilege of Gumley (before September)
751	Pippin is elevated to the status of King in Soissons and consecrated or anointed by the bishops under Boniface's leadership (autumn/ Christmas)
754	Without Boniface: *Responsa* by Pope Stephen II, presented at Brétigny (ca. April)
	Massacre of Boniface and his companions near Dokkum (5 June)
	Pippin and his sons are anointed in Saint-Denis by Stephen II (28 July)
755	Council of Ver (decree of 11 July)

PART 3

Spheres of Activity

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CHAPTER 11

Boniface in Francia

Michael Edward Moore

> I ran out in a summer dawn into the voices of the birds, and I returned, but between the two moments I created my work.
>
> CZESLAW MILOSZ[1]

1 Introduction

In Boniface's era, *Francia* could refer to the lands subject to Frankish rule, an extensive area reaching from ancient Gallo-Roman farm country to the deeply forested Germanic landscapes of the northeast, while at the same time, it could refer to the heartlands of Frankish settlement. Frankish political hegemony reached from northern Italy to Frisia, and from the Pyrenees mountains to the river Rhine, with shifting, faded borders, while its political center lay in the oldest Frankish possessions, the lands between Paris and Cologne.[2] In much of this unstable and extensive territory, Boniface played a momentous part during a period of political turmoil, as a founder of churches, an agent of the papacy, and reformer. He is traditionally thought of as a missionary, and rightly lauded as the Apostle to the Germans, but much of his work concerned ecclesiastical reform and the attempt to establish a more religious and law-abiding church order, organized around bishops and archbishops, in the territories of the Franks. His reform efforts were significant for the history of law and politics as well. He almost certainly had a hand in the Carolingian usurpation of power and the anointing of Pippin III as king in 751, and at the end of this essay, we shall explore what his role might have been.

1 Czeslaw Milosz, "In Szetejnie," in *Facing the River*, trans. Czeslaw Milosz and Robert Hass (Hopewell: 1995), 65.

2 The term Francia was meaningful, especially when its boundaries were felt to be violated, but also vague, as used in the *Chronicle* of Fredegar: "De Langobardis in Francia prorumpentibus," *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV. cum Continuationibus. Vitae Sanctorum*, MGH SRM 2, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hanover: 1888), 91. On the landscapes of Francia: Georges Duby, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Howard B. Clarke (Ithaca: 1978), 17–30. On the Merovingian hegemony: Chris Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages, 400–1000* (Harmondsworth: 2009), 112–13.

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The ensuing essay therefore turns attention to the momentous activities of the last fourteen years of his life, roughly from 740 to 754, the period of his attempted reforms of the Frankish church and kingdom. His first contact with the Franks was much earlier than that. As a missionary, Boniface was connected to the center of the Frankish world by way of its periphery, primarily through his relations with territorial magnates in the vicinity of his mission: there were many Frankish strongholds between the Rhine settlements and Saxony. The churches and monasteries he founded were situated in or near Frankish strongholds, on land provided by powerful families nearby.[3]

The Frankish world, by the time Boniface encountered it, was in a turbulent and confused state, ruled in theory by an ancient line of kings but dominated by various avatars of ecclesiastical and military power: abbots and bishops, and a warrior aristocracy, all held together by the forcefulness, the military charisma, and the negotiating skills of the mayors of the palace.[4] By the early 720s, the office of mayor was held by Charles Martel (688–741), a formidable ruler who expended his tremendous energies in constant warfare.[5]

During the time of Boniface, this fraying, antique fabric of privilege and rulership was being replaced by a unified regime animated by fervent religious and political values. That an outsider such as Boniface could play a central role in such dramatic changes, during the time when the "cold" Merovingian regime was replaced by the ideologically-driven "hot" regime of the Carolingian order, is remarkable,[6] but it falls together with the papacy's policy of making a firm alliance with the mayors of the palace.

Boniface was devoted to the concept of order, *ordo*, and believed that law was basic to the preservation of order, and the revival of order. These principles underlay his attempts to establish new connections between the Frankish church and the secular magnates, to create a framework within which the ecclesiastical fabric could be renewed by the ordination of principled bishops and abbots.[7] Without a doubt, his ability to exercise influence was magnified

3 Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum in Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (Munich: 1965), 238–39; David Parsons, "Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence," *EME* 8, no. 1 (1999), 31–67; Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: 2000), 114.

4 Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome*, 117.

5 J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West, A.D. 400–1000* (New York: 1962), 86–90.

6 Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory and the Present*, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis (New York: 1995), 16 and 42.

7 As seen through the lens of constitutional history: Heinrich Mitteis, *Der Staat des hohen Mittelalters: Grundlinien einer vergleichenden Verfassungsgeschichte des Lehnzeitalters*, 3rd ed. (Weimar: 1948), 71.

by the fact that great change was underway in the Frankish world; relevant to the career of Boniface are the dramatic historical developments in Europe in the century from 650 to 750.

2 Boniface and the Crisis of the Barbarian Kingdoms

The lifetime of Boniface (672/675–754) corresponded to an era of crisis in western Christendom, which affected nearly all of the kingdoms of western Europe. Byzantium ceased to dominate the Italian peninsula, transforming the political life and possibilities of the papacy. The Lombards, appearing at first as an organization of armies, occupied the Italian peninsula and gradually established a monarchy and duchies.[8] The church in Italy suffered tremendously, to the extent that many bishoprics disappeared entirely after the Lombard arrival.[9]

At the same time, the contradictions and weaknesses of the post-Roman Germanic kingdoms were being exposed. Centuries-old structures which had balanced the affairs of kings, bishops, and noble kin-groups were shaken by violent struggles over power and land.[10] Among the Franks, the Merovingian kings faced a crisis of confidence as they lost influence over the wider Frankish world.[11] The long-haired kings reached a nadir at about the time of Boniface's birth, when King Dagobert II was tonsured and sent into exile in Ireland, and was called back only to be assassinated in the Woëvre Forest in 678, as if in some tale from the *Nibelungenlied*. From that moment on, the Frankish magnates competed in the making and unmaking of kings in a poisonous political atmosphere. The Frankish kingdoms of Austrasia and Neustria were detached from one another, each claiming independence, as did the southern kingdom of Aquitaine, destroying a synthesis that had been achieved only a few decades before.[12] A later Merovingian dynasty of kings inspired little compassion among the Frankish elite, but awakened a desire for the restoration of

8 Giovanni Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy: Structures of Political Rule*, trans. Rosalind Brown Jensen (Cambridge: 1989), 91–108.

9 This was established by Louis Duchesne, "Les évêchés d'Italie et l'invasion lombarde," Part One: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 23 (1903), 83–116; Part Two: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 25 (1905), 365–99.

10 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 23.

11 On the crisis of Merovingian monarchy: Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London: 1994), 221.

12 Patrick J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (New York: 1988), 190.

political order. In spite of this, throughout the 7th century, the Merovingian line continued to provide the organizing principle around which land and privilege revolved, including the political influence and wealth of bishops and monasteries.[13]

Meanwhile, from roughly 680 to 740, the Carolingian family came to dominate the powerful office of mayor of the palace, and gradually to provide a new center of stability. They began exerting their control under the last Merovingian kings, and furthering their own aspirations to royalty.[14] By the time of Pippin II (d. 714) the office of mayor of the palace exerted much more sway than the dwindling power of the last Merovingian kings. Pippin sought to re-establish Frankish hegemony over neighbouring peoples[15] and in 687 at Tertry, he defeated his Neustrian rival and claimed primacy over all the Franks.[16] The rise of his family continued with the rule of Pippin's son, Charles Martel (mayor of the palace 714–741), who adopted his father's policies. Charles was a formidable fighter and a more successful leader than his father had been, racking up a series of victories in the decade following his father's death and his own accession as mayor.[17] He began to adopt the title *princeps* – the first time this honorific had been used by a mayor of the palace.[18]

The turmoil in the post-Roman world did not mean that religious life ceased to flourish. The Frankish world that Boniface came to know had endured a kind of cultural freeze – councils of the church were not held between 675 and 742 – but it was nevertheless an age of saints, which saw continued achievements of monastic scholarship, canon law, liturgy, and the writing of saints' lives.[19] Sanctity became a style of culture and a style of rulership.[20]

13 Episcopal and royal power were intertwined: Paul Fouracre and Richard A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography, 640–720* (Manchester: 1996), 4–5.

14 Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*, trans. Michael Idomire Allen (Philadelphia: 1993), 23.

15 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 50–54.

16 Olivier Guillot and Yves Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions dans la France médiévale*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1994), 99.

17 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 76.

18 Guillot and Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions*, 1:100.

19 See the reassessment of this period in: Jacques Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth, eds., *Le septième siècle: Changements et continuités / The Seventh Century: Change and Continuity*, (London: 1992); on the question of education: Pierre Riché, *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare V^e–VIIe siècle* (Paris: 1962). On the question of whether church councils were held during this period, see also Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume.

20 On the phenomenon of aristocratic self-sanctification, or "Selbstsanktionierung der merowingischen Adelsgesellschaft," see Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 502. See also Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, 38; Jean Chelini, *Histoire religieuse de l'Occident*

The Frankish church had become dominated by powerful episcopal dynasts like Desiderius of Cahors (d. 650) and Audoin of Rouen (d. 680) who amassed huge estates and were key players in aristocratic politics.[21] As episcopal elites and entrepreneurs of the sacred, such men formed companionships with other bishops and nobles, and were close to the last Merovingian kings, helping them preserve a Christian style of kingship.[22] These bishops were able to mobilize royal support for the implantation of Irish monasteries in the borderlands and for efforts to Christianize peoples in the marches: the same regions in which Boniface undertook his own missionary activities.[23]

In the late 7th and early 8th centuries, the Franks were forced to fight new wars in Aquitaine against the Saracens, who hoped to extend their successful conquest of Visigothic Spain in 711. Like other barbarian kingdoms, the Visigothic regime proved unable to resolve internal conflicts, or to recruit powerful families to support their kings, and the kingdom succumbed quickly to an Arab invasion.[24] Boniface believed that God had allowed the conquest of Spain as a punishment for the sins of the Visigoths and Burgundians. He urged King Æthelbald not to make the same mistake: "as happened to the tribes of Spain and the peoples of Provence and Burgundy, because of their disregard for the laws of God, He allowed the Saracens to come and ravage them."[25]

The Franks were directly threatened by the collapse of the Visigothic kingdom and the expansive Islamic empire on their southern border. When Charles Martel defeated the Umayyad armies at the Battle of Tours in 732, it therefore seemed that, in the view of the historian Bede, he had halted the "terrible pestilence of the Saracens."[26] Still, the Duchy of Rome also faced the challenge of

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médiéval (Paris: 2010), 91; on the lineaments of a Frankish age of saints: Auguste Digot, *Histoire du royaume d'Austrasie*, vol. 4 (Nancy: 1863), 62–67.

21 Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, 148; Wickham, *Inheritance of Rome*, 124.

22 Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms* (London: 1994), 150 and 186. On the Christianization of royal tradition: Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 165–67.

23 Wolfert van Egmond, "Converting Monks: Missionary Activity in Early Medieval Frisia and Saxony," in *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals,* eds. Guyda Armstrong and Ian Wood (Turnhout: 2000), 37–45.

24 Luis A. García Moreno, *Historia de España visigoda* (Madrid: 1989), 181–88; on the contradictions imposed by elective monarchy: Abilio Barbero de Aguilera, *La sociedad visigoda y su entorno histórico* (Madrid: 1992), 215.

25 The Epistles of Boniface are here consulted in Reinhold Rau (ed.), *Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius: nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten* (Darmstadt: 1968), hereafter cited as: Rau, no. 73, 220–22: "Sicut aliis gentibus Hispaniae et Provinciae et Burgundionum populis contingit … per ignorantiam legis Dei et per Sarracenos venire et saevire permisit."

26 See Bernard S. Bachrach, *Charlemagne's Early Campaigns (768–777), A Diplomatic and Military Analysis* (Leiden: 2013), 2–3. (This is my translation.) According to the commentary

Muslim expansion, and the dispute with Byzantium over the use of religious images meant Pope Gregory II (715–731) and his successor Gregory III (731–741) were forced to abandon papal lands in southern Italy and Sicily when threatened by Byzantine armies,[27] and gave up the allegiance to Byzantium.[28] In the end, the popes abandoned their age-old connection to Byzantium and looked north to the Franks.

In the late 7th century, about the time of Boniface's birth, the Pippinid family had practically taken power from the later Merovingian kings. Competition was frequent between Austrasia and Neustria, the two most important kingdoms within the Frankish sphere of influence, giving rise to "a period of confusion … which saw the nobles of each realm, whether favorable or hostile to the mayors, making and unmaking kings."[29] The highpoint of this process occurred just as the fate of Boniface became intertwined with the world of the Franks.

Lastly, the Christianization of Gaul and Germania was ongoing. In the regions where Boniface was active as a missionary, such as Mainz, Christianity had been practiced since the fourth century. In Boniface's day, the city already had numerous Christian monuments.[30] Boniface and other English missionaries followed in the footsteps of Irish monks and preachers in the Rhine frontier and tried to breathe life into the remnants of earlier missions, inspired by the same spiritual ideals expressed by Boniface: the "fear of Christ and the love of wandering far and wide in the land."[31] The earlier Irish missionaries had shared Boniface's strong sense of devotion to Saint Peter and to the principle of Roman primacy. Boniface founded monasteries and preached in Hessia and

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by McClure and Collins, this strangely allusive passage might be a later addition to Bede, who was not well-informed about Muslim affairs in Europe: Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People, The Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert*, eds. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: 1994), 418, note 288. However, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill accepted the account as Bede's own notice of the Battle of Tours (in which he re-deployed a phrase of Gregory of Tours): J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford: 1993), 199.

27 Johannes Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 (Urach: 1950–1953), 352–59.

28 Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Oxford: 1987), 347–48.

29 Riché, *Carolingians*, 23–24.

30 Christian monuments in early Mainz: Marie-Pierre Terrien, *La christianisation de la région rhénane du IVe au milieu du VIIIe siècle. Corpus et synthèse* (Besançon: 2007), 137–49. See also Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, 506–12.

31 Rau, no. 94, 316: "timor Christi et amor peregrinationis longa et lata terrarum." Earlier Christian establishments are detailed in John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 177–84. See also Rosamond McKitterick, "Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany: Reflections on the Manuscript Evidence," *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1989), 298–99.

Thuringia after 719. His first approach to the center of the Frankish world occurred in 723, when he visited Charles Martel to ask him for protection and support for his mission.[32] Charles and his father had previously supported Boniface's mentor, Willibrord, with gifts of land. Backing for missionaries was concomitant to Charles's military exploits in the same region against the Frisians and others.[33]

3 Boniface and the Body of St Peter

In 722 Boniface arrived in Rome and visited the court of Pope Gregory II, having travelled through Francia and Burgundy. On this occasion Boniface was ordained as bishop for the conversion of the Germans east of the Rhine, with special authority to represent the pope's sacramental authority in those regions, and swore an oath on the body of St Peter. From the moment he assumed his new office, Boniface found himself intensely and uncomfortably connected to the Franks and their ruler Charles Martel.[34] Following the ordination, Gregory tried to smooth the path for Boniface by providing him with a letter, addressed to Charles Martel, asking him to support Boniface as a man "well instructed in the traditions of the holy apostolic see."[35] Thus his oath to Peter proved to be the beginning of his engagement with the Franks and Francia. Boniface already knew of Charles Martel as the energetic leader of the Franks, whose military activity ranged from the Mediterranean to the regions where Boniface had been active as a missionary, between Frisia and Thuringia.[36]

In the constellations of power along the Rhine, missionaries like Boniface had a unique capacity to cross boundaries and build connections among varied political and religious interests.[37] Regional magnates on the edge of the Austrasian heartlands could raise their stature by granting land for the creation of new monasteries and to support Christianization. Missionary activity in turn furthered Merovingian royal (or mayoral) interests and provided the

32 George William Greenaway, *Saint Boniface* (London: 1955), 25.

33 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 110–18; Digot, *Austrasie*, 4:103–04.

34 Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, 24–25.

35 Kriston R. Rennie, *The Foundations of Medieval Papal Legation* (New York: 2013), 82.

36 William H. TeBrake, "Ecology and Economy in Early Medieval Frisia," *Viator* 9 (1978), 1–30.

37 Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 232–33.

warrant for military activity and politics.[38] For clerics along the frontier there was always a danger of getting tangled in such conflicts.[39]

In 723 Boniface entered Francia to request protection and assistance from Charles Martel, likely with a letter from the pope asking for such, although doubt has been cast on the authenticity of that letter.[40] If genuine, the letter of ca.722 would provide the earliest evidence for the epochal shift in papal politics toward the Franks in the wake of the collapse of Rome's age-old ties to Byzantium. We should probably hold this letter in *epoché*, while recognizing that the pope probably did direct Boniface to seek the help of Charles Martel.[41] In any event, it is certain that Boniface entered Francia at this time. The written response from Charles Martel, which is not in question, officially offered the ruler's *mundeburdium* to Boniface. In a letter to his magnates Charles ordered that Boniface should be undisturbed in his activities, and stated that "with our affection he is under our official protection."[42] Already in this early period of contact, Boniface began to notice faults in the Frankish church, and must have realized that he should try to exert influence in Francia and guide reform.

4 Boniface as Legate and Reformer

The death of Pope Gregory II in 731 marked a new stage in Boniface's career, as he moved from missionary and monastic founder in Germany to reformer and archbishop in Francia. The following year, Gregory III, the new pope, sent Boniface a *pallium* and assigned him new duties as an archbishop, calling on his

38 Francis C. Theuws, "Maastricht as a Centre of Power in the Early Middle Ages," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Mayke de Jong and Francis C. Theuws (Leiden: 2001), 155–216. This mode of connection between frontier nobles and the centers of power was heightened under Charles Martel: F.C. Theuws, "Centre and Periphery in Northern Austrasia (6th–8th Centuries): An Archaeological Perspective," in *Medieval Archaeology in the Netherlands: Studies Presented to H.H. van Regteren Altena,* eds. J.C. Besteman, J.M. Bos, and H. Anthonie Heidinga (Assen: 1990), 41–69.

39 Richard A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the* Liber Historiae Francorum (Oxford: 1987), 128–29.

40 Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, 25.

41 Rau, no. 20, 72. Rau considers this letter to be *unecht*, or "inauthentic." Tangl likewise considered the letter somewhat doubtful, since it is transmitted only by Otloh; see *Die Briefe*, no. 20, 34, n.1. Guillot and Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions*, 1:101; Rennie assumes that Gregory petitioned Charles on behalf of Boniface: Rennie, *Foundations,* 82.

42 Rau, no. 22, 78: "cum nostro amore vel sub nostro mundeburdio."

proven abilities as a founder and organizer of churches.[43] The pallium demonstrated that Boniface represented the presence of St Peter inside the Frankish kingdoms.[44] So closely did Boniface identify with the papacy after receiving the *pallium* that he began to use the papal form of address in his letters, calling himself "servant of the servants of God," a style first adopted by Pope Gregory the Great and used by several popes after him, including Gregory II and Gregory III.[45] Boniface's *pallium* enhanced his capacity to ordain and guide clergy within the missionary church that he was building.[46] The *pallium* and the connection it evinced of Petrine authority were equally valuable to Boniface in his role as reformer of the Frankish church.

It seems that during the years 732 to 735 Boniface enjoyed a period of respite in which he was able to study and meditate on the scriptures,[47] but Gregory III was considering a new role for him, thinking of Boniface as an agent of papal power who could make connections with powerful members of the Frankish elite and break trail for the Frankish-papal alliance. Boniface was first dispatched by Pope Gregory III to Bavaria, in 734, to preach under the aegis of Duke Hugobert (725–735), and later to organize and reform the church during the reign of Duke Odilo.[48] Perhaps in this way, he developed his ideas and skills regarding church order and how to obtain the cooperation of powerful men. The pope was playing a deep game, hoping to establish a lasting alliance with the Franks, in which the role of Boniface would be critical. The developing western orientation of the papacy may help to explain the constant interest

43 Carlo Falconi, *Storia dei Papi e del papato*, vol. 2 (Rome: 1967–), 303. Boniface was made a legate in 739: Yves M.-J. Congar, *L'Ecclésiologie du Haut Moyen Âge, de saint Grégoire le Grand à la disunion entre Byzance et Rome* (Paris: 1968), 196.

44 Guillot and Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions*, 1:104.

45 On Gregory's use of the term: Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 53–54. Gregory II used it regularly; see "Gregorius servus servorum Dei," Rau, no. 26, 88. Boniface began to use the phrase after he received the *pallium* in 732. At first he added *exiguus*, meaning small or humble: "Bonifatius exiguus servus servorum Dei," in Rau, no. 38, 116. Later he dropped the diminutive.

46 S. Schoenig, *Bonds of Wool: The Pallium and Papal Power in the Middle Ages* (Washington, DC: 2016), 13.

47 Rau, no. 30, 104: He thanked Abbess Eadburg for a gift of sacred books, "sanctorum librorum munera," referring to his Germanic exile, "exulem Germanicum." See also Boniface to Abbot Duddo, Rau, no. 34, 112–14.

48 Heinz Löwe, *Die karolingische Reichsgründung und der Südosten: Studien zum Werden des Deutschtums und seiner Auseinandersetzung mit Rom*, PhD Diss. (Friedrich-Wilhelms-Üniversität zu Berlin: 1937), 9–16; Louis Bréhier and René Aigran, *Grégoire le Grand, les états barbares, et la conquête Arabe (590–757)*. Histoire de L'Église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours 5 (Paris: 1947), 540; Falconi, *Storia dei Papi*, 2:301–03.

taken by a series of popes in Boniface's affairs, at a time when he had little social prominence in Francia, for he still had the appearance of a *peregrinus*.

5 Charles Martel and the Church

By 732 Charles Martel had reestablished Frankish hegemony from Aquitaine to Alemannia, and defeated a great Muslim army near Poitiers, halting the advance of Arab power from that direction.[49] Charles made donations of land to certain churches and monasteries, but generally to reward the echelon of his companions who were allowed to profit from those churches.[50] Since the 7th century, important Frankish bishoprics had been in the hands of aristocratic families who created episcopal dynasties, essentially fiefdoms for which Boniface expressed a clear disapproval.

Charles Martel used provisional gifts of land (*precaria*) as a basic component of his organization of fighters and the nobility. In this way he could reward his companion-bishops such as Milo by adding to their domains.[51] Charles had to assure the cooperation of bishops and abbots because of his need for this material assistance,[52] given the military demands on him. He turned from the traditional Merovingian reliance on rewards of plunder and slaves to the more enduring gift of land. This was a change that created close ties between his important followers and the prince, further distinguishing an elite group from the common population but creating the ability to make land available, which helps explain Charles Martel's success in war.[53] The practice of doling out church land allowed him to expand his retinue and military capacity without diminishing his family patrimony or the royal fisc.[54]

When, in the course of the 730s, Boniface began to engage more fully with the Merovingian church, he felt constrained by the strictures laid down by the oath he had taken. Although Pope Gregory III wanted to have cordial relations

49 Charles at the Battle of Poitiers: *Chronicle* of Fredegar, ed. Wallace-Hadrill, 90–91. See also Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 87–88.

50 Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 209.

51 Ferdinand Lot, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle* Ages, trans. Philip Leon (New York: 1931), 393.

52 Richard A. Gerberding, "716: A Crucial Year for Charles Martel," in *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit,* eds. Jörg Jarnut, Ulrich Nonn, and Michael Richter (Sigmaringen: 1994), 205–16.

53 Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Early Medieval Europe*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge: 2004), 112–13; see also Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, 208.

54 Stéphane Lebecq, *Les origines franques, V^e–IXe siècle* (Paris: 1990), 195.

with Charles Martel, the atmosphere of Charles' court and the character of the clerics Boniface met there seemed to be exactly what his oath forbade him to consort with. This problem continued to haunt him for many years. In a letter to Bishop Daniel he later explained his dilemma regarding the world of power and the priests who were part of it: "now we, needing the patronage of the Frankish court, cannot separate ourselves from contact with such persons, as the canonical rule requires."[55] His oath to St Peter expressly forbade him to commune with such persons, and it made him upset that he could not seem to avoid these prominent Frankish lords.[56]

Later, in the reform council of 742, to which we will return, Boniface was led to accept the need for such arrangements. For their part, bishops and abbots probably found it difficult to resist the pressure to yield land.[57] Charles Martel earned his reputation as a despoiler of churches, but on the other hand, land was being demanded from the churches to fund their own protection. To meet the threats facing the realm, Charles had "a massive recourse to vassalage," meaning he relied on church lands to position reliable individuals in key locations across the *regnum*, for the maintenance of public order and regional defense.[58] The mayor of the palace was "at the heart of an aristocratic circle in Austrasia which was capable of accepting the multiple challenges, and of leading the Franks in the effective deeds of war which were felt to be urgently needed by the majority in Austrasia and in Gaul generally."[59]

In addition, Charles usurped the Merovingian royal prerogative of selecting important bishops.[60] He used this power to settle influential aristocrats on episcopal estates, with little concern for ecclesiastical matters. In crucial regions, Charles went so far as to eject certain bishops and replace them with

55 Emerton, no. 51, 93; Rau, no. 63, 190: "Nos quidem patrocinatus auxilium in palatio Francorum quaerentes a talium corporali communione abstinere et segregare nos iuxta preceptum canonum non possumus."

56 Rau, no. 63, 190: "Sine patricinio principis Francorum nec populum aecclesiae regere nec presbiteros vel clericos, monachos vel ancillas Dei defendere possum nec ipsos paganorum ritus et sacrilegia idolorum in Germania sine illius mandato et timore prohibere valeo."

57 Gilbert Dagron, *Évêques, moines et empereurs* (610–1054) (Paris: 1993), 650.

58 Guillot and Sassier, *Pouvoirs et institutions*, 1:102: "Un recours massif à la vassalité." The terms *vassal* and *vassalage* have become controversial, in light of the work of Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reexamined* (Oxford: 1994). Discussion in Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 121–22.

59 Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power*, 110.

60 The Merovingians had formerly retained the privilege of selecting bishops, probably the result of discussions among an aristocratic council: Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, 143.

trusted war-captains. His troops were also, at times, led by bishops. Some of the most influential of his followers were nominally bishops, and some of them, like Milo, were rewarded with several bishoprics, while others, like the abbot of St Wandrille the, controlled more than one monastery. This was an extension of the policy of placing regional power and defense in the hands of bishops, as the power of Merovingian monarchs declined.[61] Ties between the secular magnates, monasteries, and episcopal sees were intensified in this way, and made religiously ambiguous. Charles Martel can be said to have turned the episcopate into a very different institution, depriving it of its age-old traditions in the field of letters, and by appointing ordinary poorly-educated nobles as bishops, "he finally succeeded in destroying the religious basis on which had long rested the independent power of the Frankish episcopate."[62] The vast store of land and wealth that had been bestowed on the churches over centuries was now being tapped as a treasury for the recruitment of powerful men and the provision of armies.[63] Boniface's negative view of ecclesiastical affairs in the Frankish realms reflected his education as an English cleric: he thought that rulers should offer stability and safety, and donate land to help build monastic estates. He was disappointed by the lack of interest Charles exhibited in the church – and in the end, Boniface's activities within the Frankish heartland could only begin after the death of Charles under the friendlier regime of his son Carloman.[64]

6 Boniface's View of the Late Merovingian Church

As for Boniface's view of the state of the church under Charles Martel, we can rely simply enough on his letter to Pope Zachary in 742, the year of Zachary's accession to the papacy, and the year after the death of Charles Martel. By that time, rule over Francia was taken up by the sons of Charles: Carloman and Pippin. Boniface's letter (Tangl 50) has been a highly influential document, long relied upon and sometimes held in suspicion for its negative characterization of the late Merovingian church.[65] One problem is that, anachronistically,

61 Eugen Ewig, "Milo et eiusmodi similes," in *Spätantikes und Fränkisches Gallien: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Eugen Ewig, vol. 2 (Munich: 1976), 189–219. See discussion in Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, 48.

62 Geary, *Before France and Germany*, 213.

63 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 136–37.

64 Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, 32–34.

65 The influence of Boniface in this regard can be overstated: Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, 48–49.

the letter fits so well with the later Carolingian negative portrayal of everything Merovingian, as recorded in annals and the writings of men like Einhard.[66] What follows is a brief discussion of this letter and its significant contents, in order to assess Boniface's frame of mind, his intentions as a church reformer, and the problems he encountered.

In addressing Zachary, Boniface expressed, first of all, his devotion to the apostolic see, pointing to the pope as a master of ecclesiastical law, overseer of the all-important norms of order, and more competent than any other authority "to administer the canon law."[67] Boniface had a firm belief in law as a repository of wisdom, a source of personal guidance and ecclesiastical organization. With each carefully-chosen diplomatic phrase, such as his use of the papal title "servant of the servants of God," *servus servorum Dei*, Boniface set forth his credentials to the new pope, including his devotion to the papacy and St Peter, and his official position as an agent of the papacy with specially delegated responsibilities, including the cause of "catholic faith and the unity of the Roman Church."[68] Boniface declared that he served the pope "under canon law."[69]

Next, Boniface lays out the burning question of the moment, regarding the establishment of three new bishoprics in the region where he had been a missionary, in the fortress (*castellum*) of Würzburg and in the settlements of Buraburg and Erfurt. Having found a sympathetic partner in Carloman, the new mayor of the palace, Boniface was eager to take advantage of the situation. At the same time, his role was changing, as he was now involved in bringing reforms directly into the Frankish ecclesiastical system. A crucial part of this transition was that Boniface, unlike in the days of Charles Martel, began to have the cooperation of the mayors of the palace. He asked for the pope's blessing and an official statement of approval for this project.

Boniface explained the prospects for reform of the Frankish church: "Carloman, Duke of the Franks, during a meeting with me, asked that I might assemble a synod in the part of the kingdom of the Franks subject to him."[70] Such a synod would mark a new epoch in the Frankish church, according to Boniface, because the cause of "ecclesiastical religion" had been allowed to

66 Carolingian history-writing reshaped events, suppressing the Merovingian role and vindicating the Carolingians: Rosamond McKitterick, "The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals," *English Historical Review* 115 (2000), 1–20.

67 Rau, no. 50, 140: "Canonica iure regere."

68 Emerton, no. 40, 56.

69 Rau, no. 50, 140: "Sub iure canonico."

70 Rau, no. 50, 142. "Carlomannus dux Francorum me arcessitum ad se rogavit, ut in parte regni Francorum, quae in sua est potestate, synodum deberem congregare." (My translation.)

lapse for "sixty or seventy years." In addition, he claimed no synod had been held in Francia for more than eighty years, there had been no archbishop, nor any serious recourse to canon law.[71] This may have been an exaggeration, but according to Boniface, there had been a complete neglect of the ancient requirement to hold councils of the church, and on this score his reckoning is not far off.[72] Willibald's *Life of Boniface* reinforces Boniface's view, and connects the absence of synods directly to the demands of war,[73] the ultimate focal point of late Merovingian political life. For Boniface, canon law was a basic source of order: he hoped that the promised council would be able to restore order to the church through a revival of canonical norms. The framework familiar in the Theodorean church of England – helpful kings, promotion of canon law, dedication to Rome, and a clear archiepiscopal ordering of bishops and dioceses – was woefully absent in Francia.

The remarkable letter elaborates on the ruinous condition of the church as Charles Martel had left it: "the episcopal sees in cities are in the hands of greedy laymen or are exploited by adulterous and vicious clergymen and publicans for secular uses," whose sins Boniface angrily details: fornication, drunkenness, hunting, and shedding blood in war. There is little reason to doubt the prevalence of these qualities among Martel's clerical comrades and bishops.[74] Boniface believed that with the cooperation of the mayors of the palace and a promised reform council he could overcome the problems he noted in the Frankish church. To follow his reform efforts, next we turn to the councils Boniface was able to organize.

7 Boniface, Reform, and Order

Upon the death of Charles Martel, with power divided between his sons Carloman and Pippin III, Boniface was able to exert influence directly in the late Merovingian world as an activist archbishop and reformer whose reputation as a missionary and associate of the papacy lent him a particular moral authority. He found the most sympathy and readiness for action at the Austrasian court of Carloman. The two men began to move quickly in the reform

71 For more detailed discussion, see the contribution by Michael Glatthaar to this volume.

72 Halfond calls the period a conciliar "black hole." Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768* (Leiden: 2010), 45–46.

73 Willibald, *VB*, trans. Talbot, c. 8, 52; *VB*, ed. Rau, c. 8, 506.

74 Rau, no. 50, 142.

project.[75] Boniface's attempted reforms soon gave shape to a series of councils.[76] In 742 the *Concilium Germanicum* was held,[77] followed by a second council in 743 at the royal villa at Estinnes which issued nearly identical canons.[78] Both of these councils followed the model of the Anglo-Saxon councils, in which the ruler and secular magnates participated alongside the legislating bishops. Another feature of this model was that the legislation of the assembled bishops was published as "royal" law under the authority of Carloman, in a manner similar to the religious legislation of King Ine of Wessex.[79] These councils established a lofty tone and ecclesiastical ambition that greatly influenced the later Carolingian conciliar tradition.[80] The *Concilium Germanicum* declared itself in favor of a general return to the norms of canon law and issued reforms to address faults Boniface had seen in the Frankish church: sinful priests who committed fornication could be flogged or imprisoned and clerics were not to hunt or go to war.[81] The council also affirmed Boniface's authority

75 Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), 83; Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 131.

76 H.E. Feine, *Kirchliche Rechtsgeschichte, Band 1: Die katholische Kirche* (Weimar: 1950), 188–89, 196. For a more detailed discussion of Boniface's reform councils, including the *Concilium Germanicum* and the Council of Estinnes, see Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume.

77 *Concilium Germanicum* (742), MGH Conc. 2.1, 5–7. See the analysis of Wilfried Hartmann, *Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn: 1989), 47–63; Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC: 2011), 222–25; and Jörg Jarnut, "Bonifatius und die fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743–748)," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschicht, Kanon. Abt.* 65 (1979), 1–26.

78 The Council of Estinnes is known by its Latin title: *Concilium Liftinense* (743) in MGH Conc. 2.1, 5–7.

79 F. Kempf, "Angelsachsen und Franken," *Gregorianum* 32 (1951), 579–81; Hannah Vollrath, *Die Synoden Englands bis 1066* (Paderborn: 1985), 122; and Levison, *England and the Continent*, 85. To Boniface, King Ine of Wessex (688–726) may have modeled good kingship, establishing law (*ryht æw*) and cooperating with his bishops. His effort to organize and unify the scattered small West Saxon minsters, and his issuance of a major code of law reflected a "new conception of kingship" in Britain, and a new style of law; Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: 1989), 71–73. In the course of a difficult period of rebellion, King Ine became aware of the young monk Wynfrith (later called Boniface), and entrusted him with an embassy to Canterbury, which he carried out successfully; Willibald, *VB*, ed. Rau, c. 4, 472. See also Barbara Yorke's chapter in this volume.

80 The canons of this council were preserved in the collections of Boniface's letters: see Rau, no. 50, 142. See also Michael Edward Moore, "Canon Law and Royal Power in the Councils and Letters of St. Boniface," *The Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law* 28 (2008), 22–24.

81 *Concilium Germanicum* (742) in MGH Conc. 2.1, 3. The council records of the *Concilium Germanicum* (742) and Estinnes (743) were tabulated by Tangl as comprising letter number 56: Tangl, no. 56, 34, nn. 198–102. Rau separates the conciliar decrees and prints them among the appended "Akten und Dokumente": Rau, 376–84.

over the Frankish church as archibishop and *missus* of Saint Peter. Boniface hoped to establish a group of pallium-wearing metropolitan bishops over the Frankish church.[82] In his letter to Pope Zachary announcing the coming council, Boniface reminded the pope of his own pallium and special papal authority as a papal legate, requesting confirmation and support for his proposed reforms.[83] Zachary was very much in favor of Boniface's turn toward Francia.[84]

The effort to reform through these councils continued with the further cooperation of Pippin III. In 744 a council was held in Soissons which raised the same issues.[85] At this time, Boniface tried to give practical shape to his effort to restore metropolitan rule to the Frankish church by establishing three more archbishops: Grimo for Rouen, Abel for Reims, and Hartbert for Sens. In the end, however, two of his appointments were rescinded by Pippin for unknown reasons, possibly due to the interference of Merovingian-era elites. It is sometimes suggested that Boniface was losing influence in his old age, challenged by the old Merovingian aristocracy,[86] but his continued relevance was demonstrated when the council deposed Gewilib of Mainz, "one of the leaders of the old guard."[87] However, when an attempt was made to install Boniface as bishop of Cologne, resistance was successfully mounted. Boniface as bishop of Cologne would have been at the head of the most important bishopric in the Frankish heartlands, and a metropolitan see.[88] In 747, a kingdom-wide "Frankish Council" was held, which again promoted these topics in a prestigious setting, particularly emphasizing the government of metropolitan bishops, who were now to hold regular regional synods.[89]

Carloman's abdication in 747 paved the way for Pippin to rule both Neustria and Austrasia, and the entire Frankish hegemony, and for him to take the next step, to lay claim to the throne of the kingdom.[90] Some argue that Pippin was less interested than Carloman in Boniface's reform programme, although direct evidence for this is lacking. Pippin III was clearly under the influence of

82 Schoening, *Bonds of Wool,* 30.
83 Halfond, *Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils*, 49.
84 J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford: 1983), 156.
85 Levison, *England and the Continent*, 85. *The Council of Soissons* (745) in MGH Conc. 2.2, c. 1, 33–36.
86 Dagron, *Évêques, moines,* 664. Excellent summary in: Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel,* 170.
87 Quoting Ian Wood, "Boniface," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Online version, Oxford: 2004), s.p.
88 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 131.
89 Frankish Council (747) or *Concilium in Francia habitum*. This council record was preserved in Boniface's correspondence.
90 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 170.

Boniface when he requested from Rome a book of canon law for his own use.[91] While some of Boniface's initiatives were not successful, the reform movement continued to gather steam in councils held through the year 747. The political ramifications of the legislated reforms were heightened by the fact that the canons of these councils were issued as capitularies (*capitularia*) to be enforced by the mayors of the palace.[92] This was the new shape of post-Merovingian law. As Reinhold Kaiser notes, Pippin began to take over the Bonifatian reforms as his own affair.[93]

The reform of the Frankish church initiated by Boniface, with the assistance and authority of Pope Zachary, was a highly significant movement. The powerful idea of reform, prevalent in the long history of Latin liturgy and canon law, seemed to offer a way to resolve the anomalous condition of kingship in Francia.[94] Coming into view was a political theology that would support the new Carolingian monarchy after 751, giving heightened importance to religious, biblical, and legal sources of political authority.[95]

8 Rome and a New Royal Line

The reform of the Frankish church had raised the question of the reform of Frankish kingship, marked by new rituals and procedures, and a turn to Rome as the source of authority for the new regime. The proven inability of Pippin's father, Charles Martel, to issue decrees (perhaps because of the interregnum of the long-haired kings), and the lack of great councils of bishops and magnates during his reign, created a strange mixture of tremendous military capacity, with gaps and absences in the field of power, and a poorly established legitimacy. With the turn toward canon law as a source of authority, biblical models of kingship came to the fore.[96]

91 Roger Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven: A History of the Papacy* (New York: 2009), 129–30.

92 Ecclesiastical capitularies of Carloman and Pippin: MGH Capit. I, 24–41.

93 Reinhold Kaiser, *Die Mittelmeerwelt und Europa in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter* (Frankfurt am Main: 2014), 293–94.

94 On the earlier tradition of reform in western liturgy and canon law: Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, MA: 1959), 285–315.

95 Congar, *Ecclésiologie*, 249: "Théologie politique." See also Francis Oakley, *Empty Bottles of Gentilism: Kingship and the Divine in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (to 1050) (New Haven: 2010), 160–62.

96 Chelini, *Histoire religieuse de l'Occident médiéval*, 126–28.

In 750, an embassy was sent to Rome on behalf of Pippin III, to ask Pope Zachary about the strange condition of kingship among the Franks,[97] and a group of secular magnates and clerics conducted this vital diplomacy, including Burchard of Würzburg, and Fulrad, abbot of St Denis. The Chronicle of Fredegar contains the earliest evidence for the embassy to Rome, but the *Annals* of Lorsch offers perhaps the most dramatic narrative about the embassy, reporting that Pippin's legates to Zachary were told by the pope that it were better that the one in power (the mayor of the realm) be anointed and be called king, rather than the powerless one who was falsely called king.[98]

The Frankish secular magnates, who had already participated in the reform councils of Boniface, were thus mobilized in support of the new king and dynasty. Pippin was anointed to confirm his new status as king, the first time such a ceremony had been used among the Franks.[99] It is quite possible that the practice made its way from Ireland with certain texts of Irish canon law, and was adopted to help confirm the new kingship at a time of significant challenges, both from within the nobility and the Carolingian family. Biblical models of royal unction must also have played a role, and Riché points to "Spanish symptoms," that is to say, a possible Visigothic influence.[100] The rite of anointing was a response to the significant challenge of establishing a new family as a royal line.[101]

But it is worth considering whether Boniface might have been behind the embassy to Rome. There are a number of coincidences. One of these coincidences was his understanding of order and the sources of order. Rome was the ineluctible source of order. Because of his background and training in England, Boniface was inspired by the legal and ecclesiastical activities of certain Anglo-Saxon rulers, especially King Ine, of the intellectual and ecclesiastical model of Theodore of Tarsus, and the important legal tradition of the Anglo-Saxon councils.[102] It is possible that Boniface performed the first anointing ritual, a political symbol and metaphor of divine election. In 748, Boniface's status had

97 Lebecq, *Les origines franques*, 215.

98 *Annales Laurissenses minores*, MGH SS I, 116. Discussion in Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London: 1982), 135.

99 Cf. discussion in Jean de Pange, "Doutes sur la certitude de cette opinion que le sacre de Pépin est la première époque du sacre des rois de France," in *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen*, ed. Charles-Edmond Perrin (Paris: 1951), 557–64.

100 Riché, *Carolingians*, 68–69.

101 Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons: The Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin: 1985), 79–94 and 103.

102 Barbara Yorke, "The Insular Background to Boniface's Continental Career," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 23–38.

been clarified as "legate of the Apostolic See" (*legatus apostolicae sedis*), thus giving him complete authority to act on the pope's behalf in Francia.[103] Fichtenau stated the matter with circumspection: "tradition has it that he was anointed by Boniface," thereby establishing the new king's "connection with the supernatural and the divine."[104] The action brought the authority of Rome to bear in the re-establishment of a reformed (i.e. normalized) monarchy among the Franks. With more certainty, we can say that the popes were involved in this turning point. Following the fall of Ravenna to the Lombards, in 751, the papacy's need to build a relationship with the Franks was urgent. Perhaps a second anointing of Pippin was then performed in 754 by Pope Stephen II (752–757), the successor of Zachary, when he travelled to Ponthion to meet with Pippin in that year.[105] He anointed Pippin and his sons as kings, and entitled them *patricii Romanorum*.[106]

King Childeric III, the last scion of the Merovingian dynasty, was deposed, seemingly blamed for the long-term ambiguity of royal power in the Frankish kingdoms.[107] Childeric was tonsured and sent into a monastery. The evidence

103 Rennie, *Foundations of Medieval Papal Legation,* 156–57. Considerable discussion and debate have swirled around this topic. Oakley accepts an anointing by Boniface acting as papal legate: *Empty Bottles*, 160. I argued skeptically about Boniface's direct involvement in *A Sacred Kingdom*, 231. Prinz argues that no anointing occurred in 751, but only a noble election of the king, with Pope Stephen performing the first anointing in 754: Friedrich Prinz, *Von Konstantin zu Karl dem Grossen: Entfaltung und Wandel Europas* (Düsseldorf: 2000), 221. Rosamond McKitterick views Boniface's influence as having waned at this point, making it unlikely that he should play a leading role: McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–981* (London: 1983), 35. See also her meticulous examination of the sources, which reveal a lack of unbiased or contemporary evidence. McKitterick therefore suggests that Chrodegang of Metz performed the first anointing, rather than Boniface, although none of the sources confirm this: McKitterick, "The Illusion of Royal Power," 15–16. Moreover, Chrodegang only became legate in 754: Rennie, *Foundations of Medieval Papal Legation*, 156. Wood and Hallenbeck allow that Boniface may have anointed Pippin: Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms,* 304; and Jan T. Hallenbeck, "Pavia and Rome: The Papacy and the Lombard Monarchy in the Eighth Century," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 72.4 (1982), 42–44, 77. On the debate in general: Jörg Jarnut, "Wer hat Pippin 751 zum König gesalbt?," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982), 45–57.

104 Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire,* trans. Peter Munz (Oxford: 1957), 18.

105 Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons*, 119–34.

106 Hallenbeck, "Pavia and Rome," 72.

107 Ernst Schubert, *Königsabsetzung im deutschen Mittelalter: Eine Studie zum Werden der Reichsverfassung* (Göttingen: 2004), 30–31. See also Edward Peters, *The Shadow King:* Rex inutilis *in Medieval Law and Literature, 751–1327* (New Haven: 1970), 47–55. Note that some of the impression of Merovingian incompetence was built up by later self-vindicating Carolingian accounts.

of Boniface's role in all this must remain tentative, but what has been postulated here is that the reform of the church in Francia, in the view of Boniface, was held to require a revival of authentic kingship that could play a role in the promotion of ecclesiastical life and the restoration of canon law. All of these roads led to Rome.[108]

9 *De bono mortis*

Boniface forged ahead, in spite of the pain and illnesses of old age.[109] He continued to suffer from the endless antagonism of his opponents among the great men of Francia. He wrote to King Pippin in 753: "I beg you to protect us against such deceivers and not to believe their falsehoods."[110] His subsequent withdrawal from Pippin's court and kingdom was hardly a sign of defeat, but implies a sense of conclusion and a return to self.

Because of his significance in shaping the new Frankish political and religious order, Boniface became celebrated as a saint and culture-hero.[111] In the *Annales regni Francorum* the death of Boniface was recorded among the foundational events of the Carolingian regime: "And the lord Archbishop Boniface died, proclaiming the Word of the Lord in Frisia."[112] According to historian Roger Collins, the early entries in the Royal Frankish Annals were compiled a half-century after the death of Charles Martel, sometime after 793.[113] Thinkers such as Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer argue that origins are always enigmatic and can be looked for only after the fact. In this way, Boniface was assigned a place in the Carolingian story of origins.[114]

108 Boniface was not involved in the embassy to Rome: Greenaway, *Saint Boniface*, 58–59.

109 Rau, no. 107, 336, in which Boniface complains to King Pippin in 753: "Senectutem meam atque infirmitatem consolari."

110 *The Letters of St Boniface*, trans. Ephraim Emerton, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble (New York: 2000), no. 87, 158; Rau, no. 107, 336: "defendatis contra tales falsarios et eorum mendaciis non credatis."

111 Fouracre, *Age of Charles Martel*, 131.

112 *Annales regni Francorum* (anno 754), in *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte, Erster Teil,* ed. Reinhold Rau (Darmstadt: 1955), 14: "Et domnus Bonefacius archiepiscopus in Frisia nuntians verbum Domini et praedicando martyr Christi effectus est."

113 Collins, "Pippin III," 76.

114 André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: 1998), 50. Gadamer spoke of "the riddle of the beginning," or "the meaning of beginning." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Philosophy,* trans. Rod Coltmann (New York: 1998), 13.

When Boniface withdrew from the scene of power and went back to the life of a missionary, he carried with him a copy of Ambrose of Milan's *De bono mortis*.[115] In going to Frisia, he returned not only to the northern woods and salt marshes of his earliest adventures, but to the eschatological horizon (personal, historical, and cosmic) of his religious teaching.[116] So Boniface ended his career as he began it, as a wandering preacher on the Frankish frontier, a *peregrinus*.

115 J. de Ghellinck, *Patristique et Moyen Âge: Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale*, vol. 3 (Gembloux: 1946–1948), 225; *Ambrose of Milan: Sancti Ambrosii Opera Pars prima, qua Continentur libri Exameron, De paradiso, De Cain et Abel, De Noe, De Abraham, De Isaac, De bono mortis*, ed. C. Schenkl, CSEL 32.1 (Vienna: 1897). Three volumes of Boniface's travelling library were preserved in the Fulda library, including the so-called Ragyndrudis Codex, which contains *De bono mortis*. Hans-Walter Stork, "Der Codex Ragyundrudis im Domschatz zu Fulda (Codex Bonifatianus 11)," in *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*, ed. Lutz E. von Padberg (Paderborn, Fulda: 1994), 87.

116 Eschatology provided a limitation and a boundary to the significance of politics: Congar, *Ecclésiologie*, 259–60. On the Frisian landscape of marshes, waterways, and hills covered in light beech and oak woods: TeBrake, "Ecology and Economy in Early Medieval Frisia," 2.

CHAPTER 12

Boniface in Hessia and Thuringia

John-Henry Clay

1 Introduction

For much of Boniface's missionary career his main sphere of activity was in central Germany. From his arrival in Amöneburg in 721 to his death in 754 he was the dominant missionary in the area, working closely with both local elites and the more distant Pippinid and papal authorities. Hessia and Thuringia saw his earliest and most famous monastic foundations, and there he was able to exercise most autonomy, relatively free from interference by pre-existing or competing bishops. This makes the regions particularly valuable in understanding the aims and achievements of Boniface's activity on the Continent.

The historical sources for Boniface's mission in central Germany are sparse, fragmentary, and occasionally conflicting; using both hagiography and letters, however, it is possible to construct a fairly coherent picture of Boniface's activity in the area, and much can be gained from contextualising this evidence with the aid of archaeology. In what follows I shall first consider in more detail the nature of the two regions at the time of Boniface's arrival, considering their economic, political, and religious landscapes, before I go on to examine the course of the Anglo-Saxon mission. This will be covered in four sections: first, Boniface's arrival, when he dealt with the pre-existing situation and laid the foundations for his work; second, consolidation, or the establishment of monasteries, bishoprics, and a basic parochial network; third, conversion, including the nature and challenges of Christianization; and fourth, the final years of the mission, when it suffered serious setbacks due to political turbulence and resistance from a hostile Frankish church.

2 Hessia and Thuringia before Boniface's Arrival

To avoid confusion, it is necessary to clarify the geographical limits of early medieval Hessia and Thuringia, as they do not exactly coincide with their modern equivalents. The 8th-century term "Hessia" encompassed only the northern part of what is now the modern state of Hesse and is more or less equivalent to the district now called *Althessen* ("Old Hesse"). 8th-century

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Thuringia was also smaller than its modern namesake, being more or less restricted to the Thuringian Basin, bounded by the Thuringian Forest to the south, the Harz Mountains in the north, and the river Saale to the east. Between Hessia and Thuringia lay the broad, dense forest of Buchonia, which at the time was still largely unsettled.[1]

The two regions differ significantly in physical character and historical development. Although the Eder-Schwalm basin in central Hessia had seen continuous occupation and cultivation from prehistoric times, most of the region was still dominated by thickly forested, sparsely inhabited hills and river valleys. Hessia overall appears to have been an economically marginal region, despite its proximity to the Rhine and its function as part of a north-south communications corridor between the Rhine-Main area and north-central Germany.[2] Archaeological evidence shows a conspicuous lack of such prestigious imported goods as are often found in furnished inhumations of the Rhineland and southern Germany. Culturally, too, Hessia was apparently removed from the Frankish heartlands. The custom of furnished burial that spread throughout Frankish, Alamannic, Bavarian, Thuringian, and Saxon territory from the late 4th century onwards appears to have been ignored by the Hessians, who continued to follow a burial rite, presumably some form of unfurnished cremation, that has left no trace in the archaeological record.[3]

In contrast, Thuringia, with its relatively extensive settled landscape, was more integrated into the economic and cultural trends of the surrounding areas. In part this was a legacy of the Thuringian kingdom, which had achieved a short-lived hegemony over much of Germany between the Danube and North Sea during the late 5th and early 6th centuries.[4] Following the conquest of this kingdom by the Franks in 531, Thuringia's loss of political importance is reflected in its archaeological record; even compared to Anglo-Saxon England, during the 7th century it was marginal to supra-regional European exchange

1 Mathias Kälble, "Ethnogenese und Herzogtum Thüringen im Frankenreich (6.-9. Jahrhundert)," in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer: Archäologie, Sprache, Geschichte*, eds. Helmut Castritius, Dieter Geuenich, and Matthias Werner, Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde 63 (Berlin: 2009), 344–45.

2 Hektor Amman, "Der hessische Raum in der mittelalterlichen Wirtschaft," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 8 (1958), 42–43.

3 John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 138–39.

4 Heike Grahn-Hoek, "Stamm und Reich der frühen Thüringer nach den Schriftquellen," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für thüringische Geschichte* 56 (2002), 49–60; Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 340–45.

networks.[5] Yet it was never as marginal as Hessia. The Thuringian elite followed a typically Frankish custom of west-east furnished inhumation, and through the 7th century their material culture, as far as it survives in the archaeological evidence, is broadly similar to that of the neighbouring Rhineland.[6]

The lack of any written reference to Hessia before the 8th century means that we are unfortunately ignorant of its political history. The abovementioned cultural distance from the Frankish mainstream need not have precluded some degree of Merovingian hegemony during the 7th century, but we cannot say how this was exercized, or by whom. We are better informed about Thuringia, which for a while from 640 enjoyed *de facto* independence under the rebellious Duke Radulf.[7] The Main river region to the south, beyond the Thuringian Forest, was ruled by another family of Frankish dukes based in Würzburg, who by the early 8th century had somehow extended their authority over Thuringia as well, whether through a marriage alliance or through violence.[8] The last of these dukes, Heden, in addition to his family inheritance near Würzburg, had acquired or established substantial personal estates in Thuringia itself.[9]

The late 7th century saw political developments in central Germany that would have a defining impact on the course of Boniface's mission a generation later, when he found it impossible to extend his authority beyond the limits of Frankish control. An impetus for these developments was the growing threat posed by a confederation of Saxon tribes to the north, who by the 690s were encroaching on the Frankish sphere of influence and threatening the borders of both Hessia and Thuringia.[10] The Franks reacted to this threat by investing considerable military resources in the borderlands. In Hessia they built large

5 Carl Pause, "Überregionaler Güteraustausch und Wirtschaft bei den Thüringern der Merowingerzeit," *Zeitschrift für Archäologie des Mittelalters* 29 (2001), 30.

6 Günter Behm-Blancke, *Gesellschaft und Kunst der Germanen: Die Thüringer und ihre Welt* (Dresden: 1973), 173; Claudia Theune, "Methodik der ethnische Deutung: Überlegungen zur Interpretation der Grabfunde aus dem thüringischen Siedlungsgebiet," in *Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Archäologie des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Sebastian Brather (Berlin: 2008), 229–30; idem, "Signs and Symbols in Archaeological Material Finds," in *The Baiuvarii and Thuringi: An Ethnographic Perspective*, eds. Janine Fries-Knoblach, Heiko Steuer, and John Hines (Woodbridge: 2014), 284; Blaich, "Bermerkungen zu thüringischer Funden aus frühmittelalterlichen Gräbern," 38.

7 Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 352–55; Walter Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," in *Geschichte Thüringens, 1: Grundlagen und frühes Mittelalter*, eds. Hans Patze and Walter Schlesinger (Cologne: 1968), 337–38.

8 Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 358–59; Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 340.

9 Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 338–39; Volker Schimpff and Claudia Theune, "Die Heden-Orte in Thüringen," *Concilium medium aevi* 11 (2008), 21–70.

10 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 151–52.

hilltop fortifications at Büraburg and Kesterburg, where extensive archaeological excavations have revealed the presence of mounted garrisons from the late 7th century onwards.[11] Excavations on a similar scale have yet to take place in Thuringia, but sufficient material has been found to prove the existence of 7th-century Frankish occupation at Hasenburg, Frauenberg, Hakenburg, and Monraburg. The forested region between the Harz and the upper Weser was further defended by strongholds at Bernshausen and Hünenburg.[12] South of the lower Helme was Pfingstberg, which was certainly occupied and possibly fortified by the early 8th century.[13] Across the river a linear earthwork known as the "Sachsgraben" runs north from near Martinsrieth several kilometres to the edge of the Harz mountains, and is judged by Gockel to have been a Saxon fortification contemporary with the Frankish occupation of Pfingstberg.[14] As is clear from Map 12.1, the overall result was a coherent network of fortified garrisons that served to protect the northern borderlands.

It is unclear who was directly responsible for establishing these strongholds. The ultimate authority probably came from Pippin of Herstal, who established himself as the dominant power in Frankish politics with his victory at Tertry in 687. In the wake of this success, a programme to consolidate the Austrasian borders in the 690s would have made sense. In Thuringia the authority likely devolved upon Duke Heden, who, as we shall see, owned property at the foot of Monraburg that could have helped provision its garrison. We should also consider the possibility that the newly established strongholds served functions beyond border defence, namely to watch over the Frankish colonisation of surrounding forest land, or to impose Pippinid or ducal authority on local populations who may not have welcomed it.[15]

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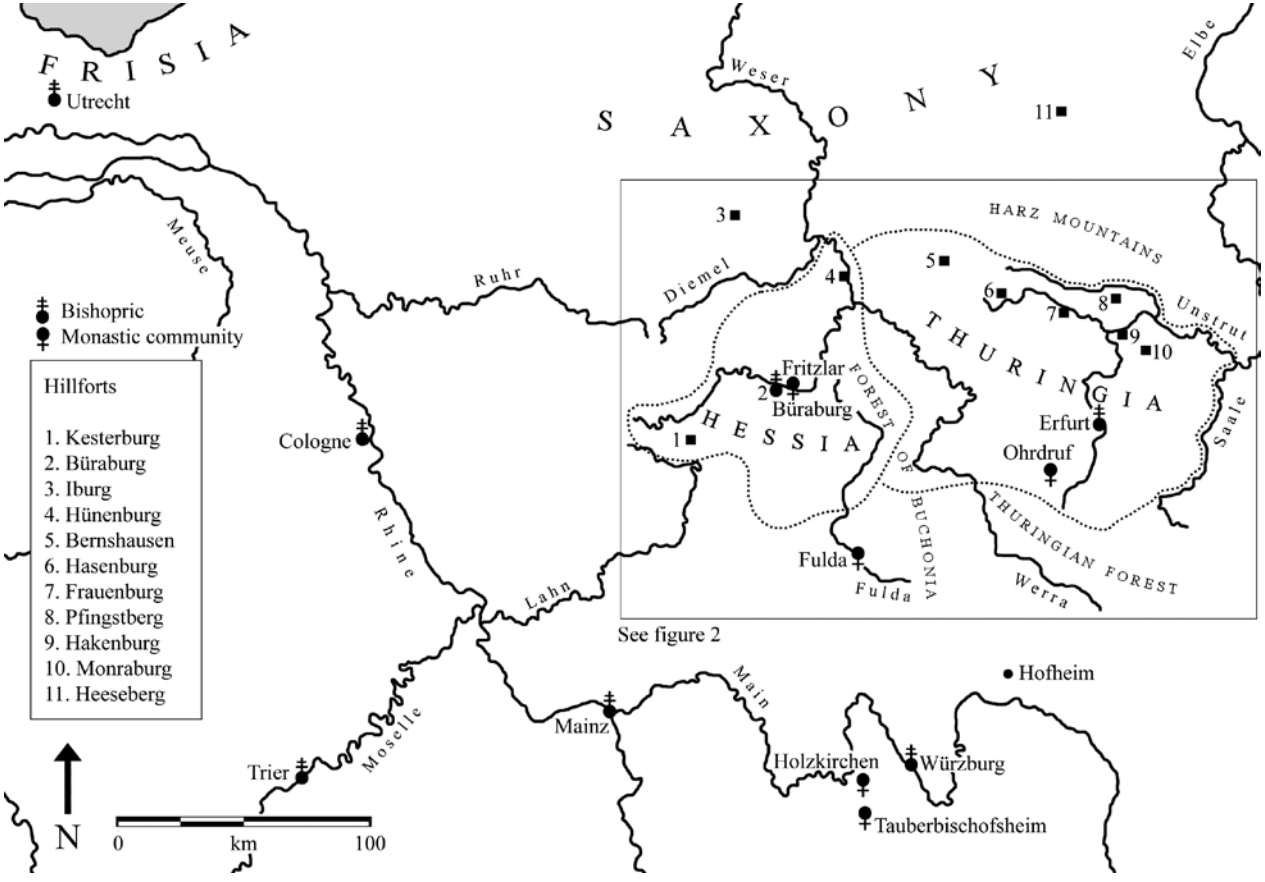
11 See Walter Schlesinger, "Early medieval fortifications in Hesse: A general historical report," *World Archaeology* 7 (1976), 243–60, for an English-language summary of the Hessian evidence. The most recent comprehensive discussion of Büraburg is Thorsten Sonnemann, *Die Büraburg und das Fritzlar-Waberner Becken im frühen Mittelalter: Siedlungsarchäologische Untersuchungen zur Zentralort-Umfeld-Problematik* (Bonn: 2010).

12 Volker Schimpff, "Sondershausen und das Wippergebiet im früheren Mittelalter: Einige zumeist namenkundliche Bermerkungen eines Archäologen," *Alt-Thüringen* 40 (2007), 297–98; idem, "Bemerkungen zum frühmittelalterlichen Hasenburgumland," *Alt-Thüringen* 41 (2008/9), 229–39; Heiko Steuer, "Die Herrschaftssitze der Thüringer," in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer*, 213; Wolfgang Timpel, "Franken: Neue Herren in Thüringen," in *Ur- und frühgeschichte Thüringens*, ed. Sigrid Dusek (Stuttgart: 1999), 172.

13 Michael Gockel, *Die deutsche Königspfalzen. Band 2: Thüringen. Vierte Lieferung: Saalfeld* (*Schluß*) – *Tilleda* (*Anfang*) (Göttingen: 1998), 555–56.

14 Gockel, *Die deutsche Königspfalzen*, 592.

15 Schimpff, "Bemerkungen," 236; idem, "Sondershausen," 298; Eike Gringmuth-Dallmer, "Archäologische Funde, schriftliche Überlieferung, Ortsnamen und Siedlungsformen als Quellen zur thüringischen Siedlungsgeschichte," *Alt-Thüringen* 26 (1991), 233–38.



MAP 12.1 Hessia and Thuringia in the 7th and 8th centuries

The imposition of authority must have been of particular concern to Duke Heden. According to hagiographical tradition from later in the 8th century, his rule in Thuringia was based on the tyrannical and violent suppression of the local leadership, one result of which was that part of the Thuringian population voluntarily "subjected itself to the rule of the Saxons."[16] This report may relate to the region north of the Harz Mountains and the lower Unstrut, beyond the line of Frankish fortifications, where the archaeological record shows a pronounced shift from Frankish to Saxon influence in the late 7th century. In the middle of the 8th century its inhabitants were regarded as Saxons and referred to as North swabians; henceforth the lower Unstrut became the border between Thuringia and Saxony.[17] We should not treat the river too strictly as a cultural or religious boundary, however. Despite the line of Frankish fortifications, Thuringia south of the Unstrut and west of the Saale has revealed ample archaeological evidence more typical of Saxon and Slavic areas, pointing towards a mixed cultural zone.[18] Historical and place-name evidence also points towards the existence of ethnic subgroups who maintained a distinct identity within Thuringia. Of particular importance was a population of Angles who may have left their mark on Thuringian legal tradition as well as on the toponymic landscape,[19]

16 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 32–33: "cetera que manebat residua populi turba Saxonum se subiecerat principatu." (English translations here and throughout the chapter are my own, unless otherwise noted.) In Willibald's account Heden is condemned with a certain Theotbald, but it is unclear whether the latter was a partner or a predecessor of Heden. He is probably to be identified with a Duke Theobald commemorated in an inscription from a church near Aschaffenburg. See the comments of Wilhelm Levison in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii*, 32, n. 4, and for further discussion see Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 339–41.

17 Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 374–78; Berthold Schmidt, "Stand und Aufgaben der Frühgeschichtsforschung im Mittelelbe-Saale-Gebiet," in *Jahresschrift für mitteldeutsche Vorgeschichte* 65 (1982), 163; Schimpff, "Sondershausen," 298–99.

18 Wolfgang Timpel, "Ein Gräberfeld des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts von Rohnstedt, Kyffhäuserkreis," *Alt-Thüringen* 36 (2003), 153–54; Heinrich Rempel, "Zur Ostgrenze des fränkischen Reiches Thüringer Anteils," *Alt-Thüringen* 6 (1962/63), 508.

19 Behm-Blancke, *Gesellschaft*, 65–71. The Engilin district, first named in the 8th century, indicates Anglian settlement in north-eastern Thuringia, and is supported by the village names of Kirch-, Wester-, Holz, and Feldengel. Günter Neumann, "Engilin," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, 2nd ed., vol. 7 (Berlin: 1989), 288–89. On the legal tradition, see Heike Grahn-Hoek, "Das Recht der Thüringer und die Frage ihrer ethnischen Identität. Mit einer Bemerkung zur Entstehung von Begriff und Institution 'Adel,'" in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer,* 446–47; idem, "The Thuringi, the Peculiarities of Their Law, and Their Legal Relations to the *gentes* of Their Time, Chiefly According to the *Lex* (*Angliorum et Werinorum hoc est*) *Thuringorum* and the Other *leges barbarorum* of the Early Middle Ages," in *The Baiuvarii and Thuringi*, 298.

and a group of Bructeri who perhaps migrated to Thuringia after the Saxon conquest of their homeland in the 690s.[20]

At some point between 716 and 719 Heden was forcibly driven out of Würzburg by the "populus orientalum Francorum," and ducal rule in Thuringia came to an end.[21] Thereafter the region was controlled by a small group of *adalingi*, independent-minded local nobles who appear to have recognized the authority of Pippin's son Charles Martel, newly victorious in the Frankish civil wars, in return for a certain degree of autonomy.[22] Chief among them were the five men named in a contemporary papal letter as Asulfus, Godolaus, Wilareus, Gundhareus, and Aluoldus, all of whom Boniface dealt with directly when he came to Thuringia in 723.[23] We should probably also identify them with the unnamed *principes* whom Boniface met on his earlier visit of 719.[24] The very silence of the Carolingian annals regarding Thuringia during these years implies that Charles Martel abstained from interfering in local affairs, his primary concern being the maintenance of the Saxon frontier. Between 719 and 729 he campaigned against the Saxons at least four times, which indicates a prolonged period of instability in the borderlands.[25]

The religious background to these political events, as far as we can understand it, was no less complex. The presence of churches in the hillforts of Büraburg and Kesterburg makes clear that the Franks representing Pippinid military interests in Hessia were Christian, and it is reasonable to suppose that Christianity had also begun to spread to some degree among the Hessian population.[26] Precisely what form this Christianity took is less obvious than we might think. The *Vita Bonifatii* preserves the tradition that the two local rulers of Amöneburg, immediately south of Hessia, professed Christianity while maintaining idol worship. The author goes on to state that the Hessians as a whole were "erring in pagan rites" until Boniface freed them "from the captivity

20 The name of the Bructeri is preserved in the villages of Großbrüchter and Kleinbrüchter in northern Thuringia, south of the Wipper. Schimpff, "Sondershausen," 294, n. 10.

21 Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Passio Kiliani martyris Wirziburgensis*, MGH SRM 5 (Hanover: 1910), c. 14, 727. Heden was still in Würzburg in April of 716, when he and his wife granted Willibrord property at Hammelburg: Georg Heinrich Pertz (ed.), *Chronica aevi Suevici*, MGH SS 23 (Hanover: 1874), 60. Willibald does not mention Boniface encountering Heden on his first journey to Thuringia in 719, so he must have been removed by this time.

22 Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 386–87; Grahn-Hoek, "The Thuringi," 298 and 305.

23 Tangl, no. 19, 33.

24 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 23.

25 Johann Friedrich Böhmer and Engelbert Mühlbacher, *Regesta imperii, 1: Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, 751–918* (Innsbruck: 1908), 13–16.

26 Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954), 141.

of demons."[27] These typical hagiographical clichés, written more than thirty years after the event, had some basis in reality, but the contemporary letters also show that, even for Boniface, the line between Christian and pagan was not always so easy to draw.[28]

Thuringia provides clearer evidence for a strong Christian presence prior to Boniface's arrival. We know that the Thuringian royal family of the early 6th century was thoroughly Christianised.[29] We can assume some continuity of the religion among the indigenous nobility, although the near-contemporary *Vita Arnulfi* claims that some of the Thuringian elite still practiced cremation "after the custom of the pagans" in the early 7th century.[30] Oral tradition preserved in the *Vita Bonifatii* recalled that the Thuringian royal line had been followed by a line of *religiosi duces* (probably including the rebellious Duke Radulf).[31] These 7th-century Frankish dukes may have been responsible for further spreading Christianity in Thuringia,[32] evidenced, for example, by the curious burial in Schlotheim of a man with a spear bearing strikingly Christian motifs.[33] If the famous carved stones of Hornshausen and Morsleben did indeed originally come from demolished 7th-century chancel screens, Christianity may have spread even beyond the Harz Mountains at this time.[34] Furthermore, Duke Heden, despite being remembered in Carolingian sources as a

27 Willibald, *VB,* c. 6, 27: "Similiter et iuxta fines Saxonum Hessorum populum paganicis adhuc ritibus oberrantem a demoniorum euangelica praedicando mandata captivitate liberavit."

28 Alain Dierkens, "The Evidence of Archaeology," in *The Pagan Middle Ages*, ed. Ludo J.R. Milis, trans. Tanis Guest (Woodbridge: 1998), 55–56. The letters in question will be discussed below.

29 Ian N. Wood, "Religion in Pre-Carolingian Thuringia and Bavaria," in *The Baiuvarii and Thuringi: An Ethnographic Perspective*, eds. Janine Fries-Knoblach, Heiko Steuer, and John Hines (Woodbridge: 2014), 318.

30 Bruno Krusch (ed.), *Vita Sancti Arnulfi*, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover: 1888), c. 12, 436: "more gentilium cadaver ignibus comburendum traderetur."

31 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 32–33.

32 Kälble, "Ethnogenese," 365–71.

33 Günther Behm-Blanke, "Das Priester- und Heiligengrab von Schlotheim: Zur Strategie und Mission der Franken in Nordthüringen," *Alt-Thüringen* 24 (1989), 199–219. The explicitly Christian character of the burial is clear, even if Behm-Blanke goes beyond the evidence in describing it as the grave of a venerated holy man.

34 Kurt Böhner, "Die Reliefplatten von Hornhausen," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums* 23/24 (1976/77), 89–138; Babette Ludowici, "Ein frühmittelalterlicher Bildstein aus der Wüstung Morsleben bei Quedlingburg," *Germania* 81 (2003), 567–74; Heiko Steuer, "Thuringians and Bavarians: Location in Space and Time and Social Relations," in *The Baiuvarii and Thuringi*, 138; Karen Høilund Nielsen, "Lundeborg-Gispersleben: Connexions between Southern Scandinavia in the Post-Roman Period," in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer*, 25–28.

tyrant,[35] was an active supporter of the Anglo-Saxon Willibrord. In 704 he granted him property at three locations in Thuringia, including two south of Erfurt and a substantial estate near the abovementioned stronghold of Monraburg. These properties were doubtless intended to support a community of missionaries.[36]

Whether any form of organized church existed is less certain. Aside from Büraburg, physical remains of pre-Bonifatian churches have proved elusive.[37] There is little archaeological evidence for pre-Bonifatian Thuringian church foundations by secular authorities, whether Pippinid, ducal, or local, even if we assume that at least a small number of such foundations existed.[38] The only exception is the recent discovery of two probable late 7th-century funerary chapels near Sondershausen, similar in form to contemporary Bavarian examples.[39] Despite the martyrdom of Kilian at Würzburg ca. 680, there is no firm evidence of Irish missionary activity in this part of Germany,[40] and if Willibrord's missionaries in Thuringia built chapels and churches, no physical evidence of them survives.[41]

The Frankish church did not trouble itself with systematically evangelising the region, even though in the 9th century the Frankish churches of Châlons-en-Champagne and Reims held property in northern Thuringia, an

35 Ian N. Wood, "Before or After Mission: Social Relations across the Middle and Lower Rhine in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, eds. Inge Lyse Hansen and Chris Wickham (Leiden: 2000), 156–57; idem, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow: 2001), 161.

36 Pertz (ed.), *Chronica aevi Suevici*, 55–56. For discussion, see Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 342–44.

37 Helge Wittmann, "Zu den Anfängen des Niederkirchenwesens in Thüringen," *Alt-Thüringen* 43 (2012/13), 26; Matthias Rupp and Sandra Bock, "St. Michael, Stadt Jena: neue Ergebnisse zu Baugeschichte, Archäologie und Anthropologie," *Alt-Thüringen* 43 (2012/13), 225.

38 Wittmann, "Zu den Anfängen," 23–26. See Hans K. Schulze, "Die Entwicklung der thüringischen Pfarrorganisation im Mittelalter," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 103 (1967), 32–70; Rainer Müller, "Mittelalterliche Kirchenbau in Thüringen: ein Überblick," *Alt-Thüringen* 43 (2012/13), 33–44.

39 Diethard Walther, "Neue Ausgrabungsergebnisse zu frühmittelalterlichen Kirchen in Nordthüringen," *Alt-Thüringen* 43 (2012/13), 78–80.

40 Schulze, "Die Entwicklung," 32; Matthias Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland: Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen," in *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Heinz Löwe, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: 1982), 275–77 and 280–82.

41 In 718/19 Duke Heden and his wife granted Willibrord an estate at Hammelburg, south of the Thuringian Forest, explicitly for the construction of a monastery, but whether or not this programme was ever completed is unknown. See Pertz (ed.), *Chronica aevi Suevici*, 60.

arrangement that Flodoard of Reims claims dated from the 7th century.[42] It is also very possible that the bishops of Trier and Mainz had interests in Hessia and Thuringia; the territory of the former included the Lahn valley, which stretched from the Rhine to the border of Hessia,[43] while the latter's authority overlapped in part with that of the duke of Würzburg.[44] Heinrich Büttner has discussed some faint evidence that the Alsatian monastery of Wissembourg, closely connected to Willibrord's monastery at Echternach, had a role in founding a monastery of St Peter in Erfurt at the start of the 8th century.[45]

Overall, however, it seems that when Boniface arrived in Hessia and Thuringia he found a Christian community that was fragmented and uncoordinated, lacking episcopal direction or strong leadership, and largely failing to reach what he considered to be the "proper" standards of Christian belief and behaviour. There may have been a number of ecclesiastical parties with properties and interests in the region, including Willibrord and the Frankish bishoprics of Mainz, Trier, and Reims. The situation was complicated by the chronically unstable political situation of the borderlands,[46] and a population that exhibited a high degree of cultural and ethnic variability. With this in mind, we can now consider the course of Boniface's mission in central Germany.

3 Arrival

The basic narrative of Boniface's arrival in central Germany can be reconstructed from the hagiography and surviving letters without too much difficulty.[47] His first visit to Thuringia was in the summer of 719, when he arrived

42 Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 279; Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 342; Heinrich Büttner, "Frühes fränkisches Christentum am Mittelrhein," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 3 (1951), 48.

43 Wilhelm Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation Althessens im Mittelalter* (Marburg: 1929), 3–5; Karl Heinemeyer, "Die Missionierung Hessens," in *Hessen im Frühmittelalter: Archäologie und Kunst*, eds. Helmut Roth and Egon Wamers (Sigmaringen: 1984), 48.

44 This is to judge from an inscription from a church near Aschaffenburg which records the dedication of the church by Bishop Regibert of Mainz *temporibus Theobaldi ducis*, who is probably to be identified with the Theotbald named in the *Vita Bonifatii* as Heden's associate in Thuringia. See the comments of Levison in *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii,* 32, n. 4.

45 Büttner, "Frühes fränkisches Christentum," 47–48.

46 Liudger makes a great deal of the poor state of Thuringia upon Boniface's arrival. Liudger, *VG,* c. 2, 69: "Nam tota illa regio, in confinio paganorum rebellium posita, illo tempore incensa erat et hostili manu vastata."

47 For concise narrative accounts, see Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 113–19 and 139–56; Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 189–206; Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 344–50.

from Rome with a papal letter of support. The letter contained no specific mandate beyond the preaching of salvation to "any peoples detained in the error of faithlessness" in a manner appropriate to their "untutored minds," with a further insistence that Boniface follow orthodox formulas and report any problems to Rome.[48] He also bore a letter of recommendation from his direct superior in Wessex, Bishop Daniel of Winchester, but there is no evidence that he had obtained a similar letter from Willibrord in Frisia. This is curious, given that he must have known that Willibrord had initiated a Thuringian mission some fifteen years earlier, and had visited Duke Heden at Hammelburg in 716. No mention of Willibrord's mission is made by Willibald, who speaks vaguely of Boniface meeting with Thuringian church leaders (*senatores*) and the abovementioned secular *principes*, most of whom had been "led astray by crooked teachers."[49] He found the local priests themselves to be a mixed bag, although the worst charge laid against them at this point is that some had forsaken their vows of chastity.[50]

His first visit to Thuringia could only have lasted a few weeks, since by the end of the year Boniface was back in Frisia by the side of Willibrord. They worked together for a little under two years, from late 719 to early 721, before Boniface returned to central Germany. This time he came first to Amöneburg, which stands in a fertile basin between the Lahn valley and the south-west corner of Hessia. As in Thuringia, he found the local secular leaders, a pair of brothers named Dettic and Deorulf, to be poor representatives of Christianity, and he wasted no time correcting their idol worship and building a chapel.[51] From Amöneburg he ventured further north, as Willibald describes: "up to the border of the Saxons, by preaching the evangelical commands he liberated from the captivity of demons the population of the Hessians, who were up to that point erring in pagan rites."[52]

In contrast to Thuringia, Willibald makes no mention of Boniface meeting with church leaders in Hessia, even though, as discussed above, we know that there was already a Frankish church at Büraburg. The Hessians, indeed, are portrayed in the *vita* as archetypal pagans, virtually untouched by Christianity, given to sacrificing at trees and springs, to observing auspices and making divinations, to performing magic and incantations, and so on.[53] Such was

48 Tangl, no. 12, 17–18.

49 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 23: "pravis seducti doctoribus."

50 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 23.

51 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 26–27.

52 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 27: "iuxta fines Saxonum Hessorum populum paganicis adhuc ritibus oberrantem a demoniorum euangelica praedicando mandata captivitate liberavit."

53 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 31.

the standard list of "pagan" customs that we find frequently in contemporary Christian literature, letters, and church council records.[54] It is no surprise, therefore, that Hessia is the setting for the major dramatic set-piece of the *Vita Bonifatii*, when Boniface fells the pagan "Oak of Jupiter" near Geismar.[55] He had some locals supporting him in this act, but the clear implication is that the Christians in question had been baptized and confirmed by him, not that they existed before he arrived. Willibald does not mention that barely a kilometre to the south of Geismar was the hillfort of Büraburg, which excavations have proved was occupied by a Frankish mounted garrison at this time. We do not know who was in charge of the garrison, but it is highly likely that Boniface, who carried a letter of support from Charles Martel, would have been able to count on their support.[56] The archaeological evidence thus offers a valuable corrective to the hagiographical account, and suggests that the felling of the oak at Geismar, far from being a daring act in the face of overwhelming hostility, was strategically planned and carefully executed under an umbrella of Frankish military protection.

After the success at Geismar, at some point in 723, Boniface headed through the forest of Buchonia to Thuringia. There he met with the local *seniores* and *principes*, and drove out a group of four morally corrupt priests.[57] By this time he had been ordained bishop by Gregory in Rome, and had also acquired from the pope the abovementioned letter addressed to the five *vires magnifices*, in which Gregory praised them for retaining their Christian faith when other Thuringians had renounced it under pagan pressure.[58] This is most likely an allusion to those "Thuringians" north of the Harz and lower Unstrut who had accepted Saxon overlordship. The four priests expelled by Boniface are generally interpreted in modern scholarship as a remnant of Willibrord's missionary party. This is most clearly indicated by their Old English names: Torchtwine, Berehthere, Eanbercht, and Hunraed.[59] That Willibald implicitly associates them with the tyrannical rule of Heden, who we know supported Willibrord's mission, also points in the same direction.[60] The accusations of fornication,

54 James Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 402–25; Jonathan Couser, "Inventing Paganism in Eighth-century Bavaria," *EME* 18, no. 1 (2010), 26–42.

55 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 31–32.

56 Lutz E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich: 2003), 40–41.

57 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 32–33.

58 Tangl, no. 19, 33.

59 Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 344.

60 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33.

adultery, and heresy levelled at them may or may not have had a basis in fact.[61] More telling is the claim that they "incited an exceedingly powerful struggle against the man of God,"[62] which, together with the preservation of their names, implies that the affair was of considerable significance at the time.[63] Willibald's wording also suggests that they were able to enlist substantial support in their opposition to Boniface.

At this point it is worth considering further Willibald's conspicuous silence about Willibrord's mission in Thuringia. We might have expected Boniface, as a former associate of Willibrord, to have built directly on the previous Anglo-Saxon mission's foundations, which in practical terms would mean Willibrord giving him the estates he had received from Heden in 704. As Matthias Werner has observed, however, Willibrord declined to do this; on the contrary, in 726 he transferred ownership of his Thuringian estate at Arnstadt, and probably also his two other estates in the region, to his own foundation of Echternach, thus ensuring that they would not fall under Boniface's control.[64] The political background of Heden's recent downfall may also have been significant, for the unpopular duke had been Willibrord's sponsor, whereas Boniface from the outset of his mission had aligned himself with the very Thuringian nobles whom Heden had oppressed. Given that Boniface answered directly to the pope, whereas Willibrord's followers were loyal to their own master in distant Frisia, there may have been considerable tension between rival groups of missionaries.[65]

Boniface had the stronger hand, however, and the result was that at least four of Willibrord's former missionaries were driven out. At the same time Boniface was facing the opposition of an unnamed bishop alluded to in a papal letter of 4 December 724. This bishop had "through a certain idleness" neglected to spread the Word in Germania and was claiming control of part of Boniface's mission field.[66] Pope Gregory promised to write to Charles Martel and ask him to intervene on Boniface's behalf. The identity of this bishop is unclear; the usual assumption is that he was Gerold of Mainz, who may have been claiming Hessia or Thuringia as part of his diocese.[67] A similar case could be

61 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33.

62 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33: "validissimum adversus hominem Dei excitaverunt conflictum."

63 Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 286.

64 Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 288.

65 Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 290–91.

66 Tangl, no. 24, 42: "desidia quadam in eadem gente praedicationis verbum disseminare neglexerat et nunc sibi partem quasi in parrochiam defendit."

67 Tangl, no. 24, 42, n. 3; Karl Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1914), 471; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 149; Eugen Ewig, "Milo et eiusmodi similes," in *Sankt*

made for Milo of Trier, who was certainly close to Charles Martel, although he may only recently have been ordained bishop.[68] He simultaneously held the bishopric of Reims, which, as already mentioned, perhaps owned property in northern Thuringia at this time.[69] A third possibility, given the above discussion, is Willibrord. We know that Willibrord had an active mission in Thuringia, that he held property there that he apparently kept from Boniface, and that they were not as friendly as Willibald would have us think.[70] The pope also states that Boniface's antagonist was claiming rights over new converts *quasi in parrochiam*, "as though in [his own] diocese,"[71] which may be an allusion to the clear physical separation of Thuringia from Willibrord's Frisian see. Finally, Willibrord was also close to Charles Martel,[72] who would therefore have been well placed to mediate the dispute. This suggestion is perfectly plausible provided that we do not allow ourselves to be misled by the hagiographical tradition, which harmonizes the relationship between Willibrord and Boniface.

Unfortunately, the hagiography is sufficiently vague, and the letter corpus sufficiently laconic, that we cannot say for sure who was opposing Boniface at the start of his mission. The later fame and universal veneration of Boniface the Martyr should not cause us to forget that in the 720s his closest friends were in Wessex and Kent on the one hand, and Rome on the other. Charles Martel's support was nominal, apparently not extending beyond a letter of protection; there is no mention of Pippinid material support at this stage.[73] The survival of Boniface's embryonic mission therefore depended on winning the trust and material support of regional landowners. For their part, Hessian and Thuringian nobles may have seen the appeal in patronising a foreign holy man who had relatively little attachment to the Frankish court or church.

These local partnerships were successful enough that Boniface received "modest places and estates" for the building of churches, as the late 8th-century

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Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag, eds. Cuno Raabe et al. (Fulda: 1954), 418–19, reprinted in Eugen Ewig, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien: Gesämmelte Schriften (1952–1973)* (Munich: 1979), 189–219; J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford: 1983), 151–52.

68 Classen, *Die kirchliche Organisation*, 4. Milo was ordained bishop of Trier between 717 and 722. See Ewig, "Milo et eiusmodi similes," 413–18, who disagrees with the identification of the unnamed bishop as Milo.

69 Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 279; Schlesinger, "Das Frühmittelalter," 342; Büttner, "Frühes fränkisches Christentum," 48.

70 Willibald, *VB* c. 5, 24–26; Werner, "Iren und Angelsachsen," 290–96.

71 Tangl, no. 24, 42.

72 Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: 2000), 127.

73 Tangl, no. 22, 37–38.

Vita Gregorii puts it,[74] while Otloh, writing in the 11th century but drawing on an older written text, names the first nobles to donate land in Thuringia as Hugo and Altbolt.[75] The latter of these men is probably identical with the Aluoldus named in Pope Gregory's letter of 722.[76] But even as Boniface was laying his foundations in Hessia and Thuringia, turbulence continued on the frontier. Charles Martel campaigned against the rebelling Saxons in 724,[77] causing dangers and deprivations for the missionaries that left a powerful impression on Boniface's teenage acolyte, Gregory. Many years later Gregory recalled his experiences to his own disciple and biographer, Liudger, who as a missionary in Frisia and Saxony had also experienced the difficulties of mission:[78]

> [Gregory], however, having set out as one of God's chosen, was not initiated through opulence and worldly delights, nor through safety and prosperity in the mortal life, but in hunger and nakedness and many labours. Through all of this [the missionaries] were drawn together to live by the work of their hands, and sometimes, when there were nearby attacks by the pagans, they and their people fled in fear for their lives to the city. There they dwelled in hunger and poverty for many days, until the citizens, having gathered their numbers, drove [the pagans] off again with a firm hand. Hence, because this conflict between pagans and Christians occurred in innumerable places, here and there a large part of those regions returned to wilderness.[79]

The "city" in question was probably one of the hillforts that guarded the northern frontiers of Hessia and Thuringia, and that were intended to serve as places of refuge for the local population in times of crisis. Büraburg would serve such

74 Liudger, *VG*, c. 3, 70: "Ibique coeperunt offerentibus propter amorem Dei et salutem animarum suarum modica loca territoriaque suscipere et in eis ecclesias construere."

75 Otloh, *VB,* lib. 1, c. 24, 137.

76 Otloh, *VB,* lib. 1, c. 24, 137, n. 1. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 152.

77 Bruno Krusch (ed.), *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV. cum Continuationibus*, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover: 1888), *Continuationes*, c. 11, 175.

78 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 105.

79 Liudger, *VG*, c. 2, 69: "Hic autem tantus profectus electorum Dei non est initiatus per opulentiam et mundanas delicias neque per securitatem et prosperitatem vitae mortalis, sed in fame et nuditate et laboribus multis; in quibus omnibus et opere manuum vivere cogebantur et nonnumquam vicinam paganorum persecutionem ob metum mortis simul cum populo suo fugere ad civitatem ibique in arto pane et angustiis per dies plures habitare, donec collecta multitudine sua cives manu validiore eos iterum effugarent. Hoc ergo certamen inter paganos et christianos quoniam per innumeras vices gerebatur, idcirco hinc et inde magna pars regionum illarum redacta erat in solitudinem."

a function during a Saxon attack on Fritzlar in 774, as vividly described by Lupus of Ferrières.[80] Conflicts that hagiographers saw in exclusively religious terms, of course, in reality were just as much political; aggressive raiding of the borderlands was a basic political tactic of a warlike society. But whatever the causes, the result was the economic degrading of a wide swathe of territory and the traumatisation of its people.[81]

4 Consolidation

At the end of 724, the pope wrote to bolster Boniface's courage after a difficult year: "Let no threats frighten you," he wrote, "no terrors bring you down."[82] For the next few years the borderlands appear to have been at peace, and having secured an economic base for the mission, Boniface set about building up his community of missionaries. Otloh provides a list of the foremost figures who joined Boniface over the years: Burchard (later bishop of Würzburg); Lull (Boniface's successor as bishop of Mainz); Willibald (later bishop of Eichstätt); Wynnebald (later abbot of Heidenheim); Witta (later bishop of Büraburg); Gregory (later abbot of Utrecht); Cynehild and Berthgyth (both established as teachers in Thuringia); Walpurga (later abbess of Heidenheim); Thecla (later abbess of Kitzingen); Cynetrud (later active in Bavaria); and Leoba (later abbess of Tauberbischofsheim).[83] The close-knit nature of this group is shown particularly in their family connections. Willibald, Wynnebald, and Walpurga were siblings; Cynehild was the mother of Berthgyth and the maternal aunt of Lull; and Leoba was a relative of Boniface. Gregory is conspicuous by being the sole non-Anglo-Saxon. Important figures missing from the list are Sturm, the later abbot of Fulda, a Bavarian by birth; Wigbert, sometime abbot of Fritzlar and Ohrdruf; Eoban, Boniface's messenger and companion, who died with him in Frisia; and Hygeburg, a nun of Heidenheim who wrote biographies of her relatives Willibald and Wynnebald.

The remainder of the 720s and 730s Boniface devoted to his work in Hessia and Thuringia, with a known journey to Rome via Bavaria in 737 to 738, and an attempt to evangelise parts of Saxony from 738.[84] His first monastic foundations were at Fritzlar in Hessia in 723, and Ohrdruf in Thuringia shortly

80 Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti abbatis Frideslariensis*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), cc. 13–18, 41–42.

81 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33, also describes the extreme poverty of the early mission in Thuringia.

82 Tangl, no. 24, 42: "Nec minae terreant nec deiciant terrores."

83 Otloh, *VB*, lib. 1, c. 25, 138.

84 See John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 206–25.

thereafter.[85] In its early years the church of Fritzlar was presided over by the priest Wigbert, among whose charges was the young oblate Sturm.[86] In 732, when Boniface was made archbishop, the church at Fritzlar appears to have been rebuilt, and perhaps only at this point was it formally constituted as a monastery with Wigbert as abbot.[87] Although the evidence is uncertain, Boniface may also have established another community at nearby Büraburg under a disciple named Humbert, who was followed as abbot by Witta.[88] According to Otloh, the land for the monastery at Ohrdruf in Thuringia was granted by the abovementioned nobleman Hugo, and the community may have become known especially as a place of education.[89] Wigbert, abbot of Fritzlar, was appointed over Ohrdruf for a time.[90] We also know that Wynnebald, upon joining the mission in 738, was given seven unnamed churches to administer somewhere in Thuringia.[91]

This phase of the mission must have seen the gradual accumulation of property, the training of the next generation of monks and nuns, and the establishment of a basic parochial system. We can get some idea of the property held by Boniface from an early 9th-century document known as the *Breviarium Sancti Lulli*, a summary of estates held by Boniface's successor, Lull.[92] Some of the estates had been granted to Lull by Charlemagne, and some he had acquired by donations from private individuals, but a large proportion of them must have been inherited directly from Boniface.[93] At Ohrdruf, for example, Lull owned eight *hubae* of land in 775,[94] while at nearby Sülzenbrücken he owned forty-two; in both places stood churches founded by Boniface. The

85 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 33–34. Willibald places Fritzlar's foundation after Boniface's ordination as bishop, but it was probably founded by 723. For discussion, see Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 200–03.

86 Eigil, *VS*, c. 2, 366.

87 For full discussion, see Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 205–06.

88 Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 203–05.

89 This is assuming that Cynehild and Berthgyth, when they were established as teachers in Thuringia, came to Ohrdruf. The same is true for Lull, who requested of Boniface that he be allowed to remain in Thuringia to continue his education. Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe*, no. 103, 226.

90 Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti*, c. 6, 40.

91 Hygeburg, *VWyn*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), c. 4, 109.

92 Hans Weirich (ed.), *Urkundenbuch der Reichsabtei Hersfeld* (Marburg: 1936), no. 38, 68–74.

93 For a close analysis of the document's structure, see Josef Hörle, "*Breviarium sancti Lulli*: Gestalt und Inhalt," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 12 (1960), 19–23.

94 A *huba* was more or less equivalent to the Anglo-Saxon hide, being a unit of land farmed by a single peasant household. See Georges Duby, *Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West*, trans. Cynthia Postan (Columbia: 1968), 29.

overall distribution of properties shown on Map 12.2 suggests that Boniface had strong support in central Hessia as well as in south-west and north-east Thuringia, but there is a conspicuous void in the immediate environs of Erfurt and east of the river Gera around Weimar, despite these being heavily settled districts in the 8th century. This may be symptomatic of political factions among the Thuringian nobility, as a result of which Boniface found strong support in some areas, and ambivalence or hostility in others.

This accumulation of property allowed the construction of parish churches. Little direct evidence of these remains, although we can see traces of Bonifatian parochial structures fossilized within the later medieval church landscapes of Hessia and Thuringia.[95] By 741 Boniface felt ready to found his first bishoprics at Büraburg in Hessia, Erfurt in Thuringia, and Würzburg south of the Thuringian Forest, as he wrote in a letter to Pope Zachary.[96] To preside over Büraburg he chose Witta, whose papal letter of confirmation survives.[97] In Würzburg, according to the *Vita Bonifatii*, Boniface installed Burchard.[98] There is no record of who was installed at Erfurt. It was possibly Wynnebald's brother Willibald, who was ordained bishop by Boniface, Witta, and Burchard at Sülzenbrücken, 14 kilometres south-west of Erfurt, in October 741.[99]

In 744 Boniface supervised the foundation of his best-known monastery at Fulda. The site had been selected after extensive surveying by the Fritzlar-trained priest and monk Sturm, who had been living as a hermit at Hersfeld.[100] The forest of Buchonia was sparsely settled at this time and formed a wide border zone between Hessia and Thuringia. The monastery was founded on a virgin site,[101] but its location at an important crossing point of the river Fulda shows that Boniface did not have a pure wilderness in mind when he sent

95 For the Hessian evidence, see Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 331–41.

96 Tangl, no. 50, 81.

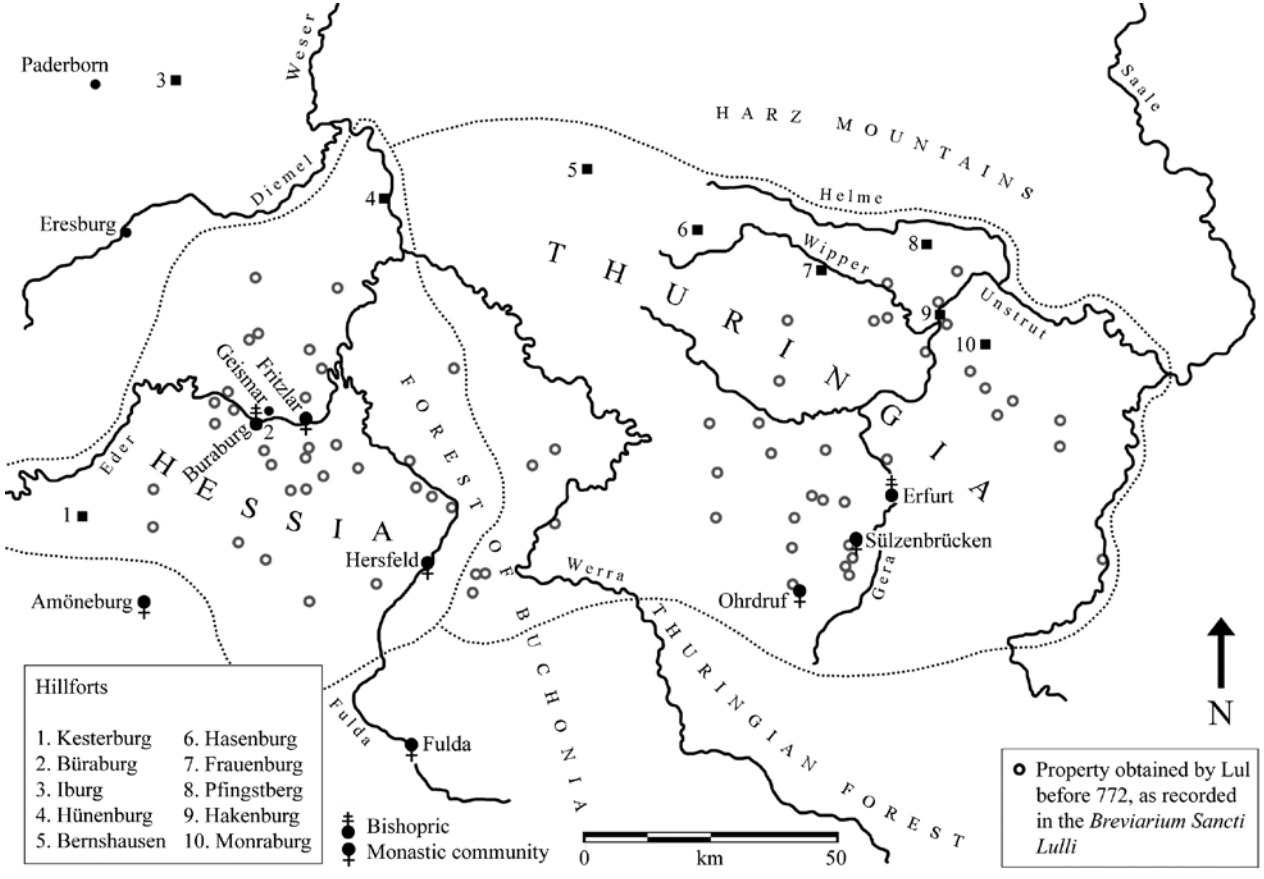
97 Tangl, no. 52, 92–94.

98 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 44.

99 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5, 105. There has been historiographical dispute over whether Willibald was originally installed as bishop of Erfurt and later transferred to Eichstätt, or whether some other figure occupied the seat of Erfurt. For a full discussion, see Alfred Wendehorst, *Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz: Das Bistum Eichstätt, 1: Die Bischofsreihe bis 1535* (Berlin: 2006), 19–31.

100 Eigil, *VS*, cc. 4–13, 367–71.

101 The buildings excavated at Fulda by Josef Vonderau in 1898–1899, and believed by him to be a Merovingian *curtis* predating the monastery, have now been firmly established as 10th century in date. There is no evidence for settlement at Fulda prior to Sturm's selection of the site. See Thomas Kind, "Pfahlbauten und merowingischer *curtis* in Fulda?," in *Geschichte der Stadt Fulda, Band 1: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des alten Reiches*, eds. Wolfgang Hamberger, Thomas Heiler, and Werner Kirchhoff (Fulda: 2009), 62.



MAP 12.2 Hessia and Thuringia in the 8th century, showing properties obtained by Boniface and Lull

Sturm to reconnoitre the region. The river offered relatively easy communication both south to the Main corridor and north to Saxony, while the trading road ran west to Mainz and east to Thuringia. Following navigable rivers and major routeways, Fulda was almost exactly 100 km from Fritzlar/Büraburg, Ohrdruf/Erfurt, and Würzburg, and only slightly more distant from Mainz. Early opposition to the foundation from local landowners was overcome with the help of Charles Martel's son Carloman. The building of the monastery took several years, and in 751 Boniface notified Zachary of its existence "in the midst of the peoples to whom we preach."[102]

5 Conversion

By 751, in which year Wynnebald and Willibald also founded a new monastery at Heidenheim near Eichstätt, Boniface and his followers had been preaching in central Germany for almost thirty years. A handful of the surviving letters provide insight into the problems they encountered. For the most part these letters are papal responses to Boniface's queries, where the issue at stake is the orthodoxy of a particular custom without regard to its precise cultural context or geographical location. Corroborating evidence of similar customs, likewise shorn of their original context, can be found in the so-called *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*.[103] This list of non-Christian customs was probably compiled in connection with Boniface's church councils held in April 742 at an unknown location (the so-called Concilium Germanicum) and in March 743 at Estinnes.[104] Literary references to paganism in the hagiography, as already

102 Tangl, no. 86, 193: "in medio nationum predicationis nostrae." On Fulda's founding and early years: Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c. 744–c. 900* (Cambridge: 2012), 26–40; Karl Heinemeyer, "Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 30 (1980), 10–29.

103 *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 222–23. For discussion of the text, see Alain Dierkens, "Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne: À propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*," in *Magie, Sorcellerie, Parapsychologie*, ed. Herveé Hasquin (Brussels: 1984), 9–26.

104 Tangl, no. 56, 98–102; also Alfred Boretius (ed.), *10: Karlmanni principis capitulare*, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 24–28. See Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs* (Frankfurt: 2004), 633–38, and his contribution to this volume, esp. Chapter 10.4. On the possibility that the *Indiculus* was originally compiled at Utrecht, see Marco Mostert, "Communicating the Faith: The Circle of Boniface, Germanic Vernaculars, and Frisian and Saxon Converts," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 70 (2013), 120–22, and his contribution to this volume.

discussed, are particularly vague and clichéd. Despite the limitations of the evidence, however, we can catch furtive glimpses of the sorts of cultural practices encountered and condemned by Boniface and his followers.

Burial archaeology provides a useful starting point in understanding the background to the literary evidence, particularly when it comes to animal sacrifice associated with burials and house building. In the north of Thuringia burial customs involving animal slaughter continued into the early 8th century. Around the time of Willibrord's mission the community of Rohnstedt (28 kilometres north of Erfurt) inaugurated a new cemetery with the slaughter of a horse, cow, and two young pigs,[105] while nearby Urleben saw the construction of a mound for the cremation and burial of a high-status young woman, again with animal slaughter.[106] A similar early 8th-century mound cremation, a rite that was unusual in Thuringia but relatively common in Saxony until later in the century,[107] is also evidenced at Berlstedt in eastern Thuringia,[108] while horse burials are known from Urleben, Berlstedt, Muhlhausen, and various other sites especially in the north of Thuringia.[109] Similar mound burials are known from the fringes of Hessia, if not from Hessia itself; the second half of the 7th century saw a series of furnished mound cremations and inhumations in the Lahn valley at Gießen and Germershausen, as well as near Amöneburg and Kesterburg.[110] Horse burials are unknown within Hessia, but appear on its northern border at Liebenau on the Diemel, and to the east at Eschwege-Niederhone on the Werra.[111]

There is little doubt that cremation was viewed by certain Franks as a pagan custom, being explicitly described as such in the 7th-century *Vita Arnulfi*, and outlawed in Saxony in the later 8th century.[112] That it was not discussed at the Concilium Germanicum in 742 suggests that it was not widely practiced in

105 Timpel, "Ein Gräberfeld," 150–51.

106 Wolfgang Timpel, "Ein spätmerowingerzeitlicher Grabhügel von Urleben, Kr. Bad Langensalza," *Alt-Thüringen* 14 (1977), 275–77.

107 Bonnie Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae* and the Regulation of Mortuary Custom: A Carolingian Campaign of Christianization or the Suppression of Saxon Identity?," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 75.2 (1997), 278–79.

108 Timpel, "Ein spätmerowingerzeitlicher Grabhügel," 282.

109 Timpel, "Grabhügel," 277; Peter Sachenbacher et al., "Völkerwanderungszeitliche Gräber bei Mühlhausen/Thüringen Zu einigen ausgewählten Problemen des Grabbrauchs und der Grabberaubung anhand neuer Gräber von Ammern, Lkr. Mühlhausen," *Alt-Thüringen* 27 (1993), 172.

110 For further discussion see Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 143–51.

111 Timpel, "Ein spätmerowingerzeitlicher Grabhügel," 286.

112 Krusch (ed.), *Vita Sancti Arnulfi*, c. 12, 436; Alfred Boretius (ed.), *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), c. 7, 69.

Boniface's missionary territory by that time. Mound burial, though not itself banned, also came to be associated with paganism in Saxony under Charlemagne, but there is no indication that prior to this it was viewed as a problematic burial tradition.[113] Something similar might be said of horse burial; we might assume that this was an obviously non-Christian custom, but from the 6th to the early 8th century horse burials were widespread especially in Thuringia, the upper Danube, and the middle Rhine, including from clearly Christian contexts. The vast majority were stallions between three and ten years old, associated with high-status male inhumations, and were probably regarded by contemporaries as a particularly extravagant form of grave furnishing.[114] It is possible that the slaughter of a horse at the graveside carried uncomfortable connotations of religious sacrifice,[115] and so was discouraged by Christian missionaries, but there is no condemnation of the custom in contemporary church documents. More probably it fell out of fashion in central Germany during the early Carolingian period, as did cremation and furnished burial generally.

The 8th-century church was relatively little concerned about burial ritual *per se*.[116] More problematic was the tradition of offering or consuming sacrificial foods, whether this took place as part of a burial rite or in other contexts.[117] As early as 726, for instance, Boniface raised the matter of animal sacrifice with Pope Gregory, specifically the question of whether making the sign of the cross over sacrificial food made it suitable for Christians to eat.[118] Within the first few years of the mission he also encountered priests who had sacrificed to Jupiter and eaten of the sacrificial meat, and a later letter suggests that the sacrificed animals in question had been goats and bulls.[119] Such sacrifices to pagan gods were clearly to be condemned, but other situations were less clear-cut.

113 Boretius, *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, c. 22, 69. Effros, "*De partibus Saxoniae*," 276 and 280–83.

114 Judith Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen: Opfer oder Beigaben?," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 18 (1984), 137–38; Heiko Steuer, "Pferdegräber," in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 27 (Berlin: 2004), 56–57.

115 Oexle, "Merowingerzeitliche Pferdebestattungen," 150. The prevalence of younger stallions in Saxon horse burials lends weight to the argument that in Saxony, at least, the animals in question were dedicated to sacrifice from an early age. Torsten Capelle, *Die Sachsen des frühmittelalters* (Darmstadt: 1998), 129.

116 Frederick Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, New York: 1990), 61–63.

117 Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul: Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park, Penn.: 2002), 185–86.

118 Tangl, no. 26, 46.

119 See Tangl, no. 28, 51, dated to ca. 732, and no. 80, 174–75, dated to 748.

A common problem was the habit among new converts of making offerings at the graves of dead relatives, a long-standing tradition that was singled out for condemnation at the Concilium Germanicum.[120] One solution was to allow offerings to the church in return for prayers on behalf of the deceased, but Pope Gregory ruled that this was permissible only if the dead person had been a good Christian.[121] Some converts transferred their traditional sacrificial customs directly from the old gods into the new Christian context, gathering on church grounds to sacrifice to the martyrs and confessors. No doubt they did this with the best of intentions, but they were derided as "foolish" at the Concilium Germanicum and accused of angering the saints.[122]

From the fragmentary evidence it seems that the impulse to sacrifice, whether to appease ancestors, ensure the protection of a deity, or avert the malign influence of unseen forces,[123] was deeply embedded in the culture and world-view of the ordinary people, and this impulse could find expression in many ways. At one extreme was human sacrifice, which was apparently practiced in contemporary Saxony, although there is no evidence that Boniface encountered it in Hessia or Thuringia.[124] Other forms of sacrifice were more innocuous. At the hillfort of Frauenberg in northern Thuringia, the site of a high-status Christian burial ground still in use when Boniface arrived, the enclosed cemetery and chapel were accessed via a small wooden entrance chamber, in the floor of which the builders had deliberately deposited bones from a deer, sheep, and dog, along with the limb of a horse.[125] Such ritual deposition of animal parts in building foundations, especially at thresholds, is archaeologically attested before and after the early medieval period in northern Europe;

120 Tangl, no. 56, 100. Archaeological evidence for this custom was found in a 6th- to 7th-century cemetery in Weimar. Albert Genrich, "Archäologische Aspekte zur Christianisierung im nördlichen Niedersachsen," in *Die Eingliederung der Sachsen in das Frankenreich*, ed. Walther Lammers (Darmstadt: 1970), 481–82.

121 Tangl, no. 28, 50–51.

122 Tangl, no. 56, 100. The same custom appears in the *Indiculus*, c. 9, 223.

123 Ralph Merrifield, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (London: 1987), 118–19; Hilda Ellis Davidson, "Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North Western Europe," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in Northwestern Europe*, ed. Martin O.H. Carver (Woodbridge: 1992), 331.

124 On the archaeological and historical evidence for human sacrifice in the early medieval period, see Davidson, "Human Sacrifice." In 732 Boniface wrote to the pope asking him how to punish Christian merchants who were selling slaves to "pagans" for sacrifice: Tangl, no. 28, 51. The same merchants were condemned by Carloman at the Council of Estinnes in 743: Tangl, no. 56, 102. No Frankish ruler explicitly outlawed human sacrifice itself until Charlemagne's *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae*, *c.* 10, 69.

125 Walter, "Neue Ausgrabungensergebnisse," 82.

it was also practiced by the West Saxons in Boniface's time,[126] as he may have known.

Other traditions condemned by Boniface and his missionaries involved traditional festivals in honour of "Mercury" and "Jupiter" (the standard Latin rendering of the Germanic gods Wodan/Woden and Donar/Thunaer),[127] pig feasts in February,[128] a large bonfire known as the *nodfyr*,[129] the communal procession of effigies around fields,[130] and so on. The effigies used in public processions were presumably large in size, but smaller ones, perhaps resembling the poppets of later medieval witchcraft, could be made of bread or rags.[131] Some customs, such as reading auguries from birds and livestock,[132] inspecting animal brains,[133] prophesying at the hearth,[134] or uttering magical incantations,[135] may have been private or public in nature; others, like wearing protective amulets or knots,[136] or stuffing cots with magically protective straw and herbs,[137] were inherently personal.

How successful the missionaries were in challenging these customs is unknown. The widespread popularity of communal processions with religious icons or effigies into the later medieval period shows that, at least to some extent, the church was willing to adapt pre-existing customs to a Christian framework.[138] Yet the word-for-word reiteration of the decrees from the Concilium Germanicum by Charlemagne at the start of his reign indicates how little

126 See Martin Millett and Simon James, "Excavations at Cowdery's Down, Basingstoke, Hants, 1978–81," *Archaeological Journal* 140 (1983), 221. The construction of the defences of Carolingian Münster in the late 8th century, likely by Saxon labour, also involved the "foundation sacrifice" of a horse and a possibly live dog: Wilhelm Winkelmann, *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte Westfalens: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Münster: 1984), 70–88.

127 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 20, 223.

128 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 3, 223.

129 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 15, 223. This custom was also condemned at the Concilium Germanicum. Tangl, no. 56, 100.

130 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 28, 223.

131 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, cc. 26–27, 223.

132 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 13, 223.

133 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 16, 223.

134 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 17, 223.

135 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 12, 223. On the so-called Merseburg Incantations, see Patricia Giangrosso, "The Merseburg Charms," in *Medieval Germany: An Encyclopedia*, ed. John M. Jeep (London: 2001), 112–14.

136 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 10, 223.

137 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 19, 223.

138 Dierkens, "The Evidence of Archaeology," 55.

progress had been made in Boniface's lifetime.[139] Presumably it would have been easier to control the behaviour of converts in churches and adjoining cemeteries, which would have helped stop inappropriate sacrifices to the saints and the graveside lamentations referred to in the *Indiculus* as *dadsisas*,[140] but a mission that was chronically short of manpower could hardly monitor and correct the daily behaviour of an entire population.[141] Also, converts avoided churches in favour of worshipping at their traditional springs and groves, at crosses and chapels set up in the open countryside,[142] or even in their own homes with wandering holy men who did not answer to Boniface.[143]

6 The Final Years

Keeping control of his central German mission field was a critical problem for Boniface during his later years. The high point of the mission was arguably the early 740s, when he founded his bishoprics in central Germany and was attempting to expand his mission into Saxony. This same activity, however, brought him into more frequent contact with members of the Austrasian church who shared neither his missionary zeal nor his monastic outlook.[144] One of his main rivals was Gerold of Mainz, who had inherited his see from his father and was closely connected to the Austrasian court. According to 11th-century tradition, Bishop Gerold accompanied Carloman when he invaded Saxony in 743 in retaliation for Saxon attacks on Thuringia. Gerold unfortunately was killed in battle,[145] although Carloman proceeded as far as the Saxon fortification on Heeseberg, which he occupied while accepting the surrender of the Saxon leader Theoderic.[146] The following year Carloman again entered Saxony, having strengthened his military by exploiting church resources.[147]

139 Alfred Boretius (ed.), *Caroli Magni capitulare primum*, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 44–46.

140 Boretius (ed.), *Indiculus*, c. 2, 223.

141 On the shortage of qualified priests, see Boniface's comments in Tangl, no. 91, 207–08.

142 Tangl, no. 59, 110–11.

143 Tangl, no. 80, 175.

144 Ewig, "Milo et eiusmodi similes."

145 Otloh, *VB*, c. 41, 155. The same story (which mistakenly calls Carloman "Charles") is told in the slightly earlier *Vita quarta Bonifatii*. Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), c. 1, 90.

146 Frederick Kurze (ed.), *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, MGH SRG 6 (Hanover: 1895), 5.

147 This measure was announced at the Council of Estinnes in March 743: Tangl, no. 56, 102. On its significance, see Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, AD 511–768* (Leiden: 2010), 123–24.

This time he was joined by his brother Pippin, and together they captured Theoderic a second time, taking hostages from the Saxons.[148] During this second campaign Gerold's son Gewilib, a former layman who had assumed the bishopric of Mainz, supposedly avenged his father's death by murdering his killer during a parley on the river Weser.[149] As a result Gewilib lost favour at court and was driven out of Mainz. He fled to Rome, presumably to appeal against his expulsion, but Boniface's messenger overtook him and forewarned the pope about his arrival.[150]

These Frankish campaigns in Saxony indicate serious instability on the Hessian and Thuringian frontier in the mid-740s. This is corroborated by a report of Boniface to Pope Zachary in 745 that part of his territory had suffered a devastating pagan invasion.[151] Gewilib's fortuitous removal at least allowed Boniface to occupy Mainz while he awaited his appointment to the city of Cologne, which he intended to make his own seat as archbishop of the new metropolitan see of Germania. He had in fact been promised Cologne by the Franks, and even received papal confirmation in 745,[152] but the Franks ultimately failed to deliver on their promise for reasons that have not survived. Boniface instead remained in Mainz.[153] At about this time he seems to have demoted the sees of Büraburg and Erfurt, replacing the resident bishops with assistant bishops or archdeacons subordinate to himself.[154]

If the failure of Boniface's short-lived bishoprics in Hessia and Thuringia was related to the increasing instability on the Saxon frontier, the following years offered little respite. In 746 Carloman retired into the church, which must have been a blow for Boniface; as his patron, Carloman had strongly supported his church councils, whereas Pippin and Boniface were not close.[155] Matters were soon made worse when in 747 civil war broke out between Pippin and his half-brother Grifo. The latter fled to eastern Saxony with a number of disaffected young Frankish nobles, where they joined forces with the local leaders, including Carloman's former foe Theoderic.[156] Thuringia once again became

148 Kurze (ed.), *Annales regni Francorum*, 5; Krusch (ed.), *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii, Continuationes* c. 27, 180–81.

149 Otloh, *VB*, c. 41, 155; Levison (ed.), *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 1, 91.

150 Tangl, no. 60, 124.

151 Only the pope's reply survives. Tangl, no. 60, 121.

152 Tangl, no. 60, 121.

153 Tangl, no. 80, 179–80.

154 Tangl, no. 80, 179–80; Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 229–34; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, 278; Wolfgang Fritze, "Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen in die Mainzer Diözese," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 4 (1954), 37–63.

155 Rosamund McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: 2004), 150.

156 Kurze (ed.), *Annales regni Francorum*, 6.

the base for a Frankish invasion north of the Harz Mountains, which began with the abject surrender and baptism of the North Swabians, and led to yet another capture of Theoderic and the devastation of a large tract of Saxony.[157] Despite this humiliation, the Saxons soon regathered their strength; by 751 Boniface had a growing sense of danger on the frontier,[158] and in 752 more than thirty of his churches were sacked and burned.[159] It was probably Hessia that bore the brunt of the attack, since Pippin's retaliatory campaign in 753 targeted the Paderborn region across the river Diemel. Once again a Frankish bishop accompanied the invading army, this time the recently appointed Hildegar of Cologne, who had already tried to interfere with Boniface's influence in Frisia.[160] Like Gerold ten years earlier, Hildegar was killed by the Saxons.[161]

A late glimpse of Boniface's mission in central Germany comes from a well-known letter he wrote to Abbot Fulrad of St Denis in about 752. The letter was a plea to Fulrad to intercede on Boniface's behalf with Pippin, who had recently assumed the title of king. By this time Boniface was an old man of over seventy years, weak-eyed,[162] white-haired, and decrepit.[163] He was conscious that he did not have long to live and was anxious to secure royal protection for his disciples:

> For they are almost all foreigners. Some are priests based in many places for the ministry of the church and the people; some are monks assigned to our foundations, including children learning to read; and others are old men who have laboured for a long time while living with me and assisting me. I am worried about all of them, that they should not be scattered after my death, but should have the counsel of your support and the patronage of your Highness, and not be dispersed like sheep without a shepherd, and the people near the border of the pagans will not lose the law of Christ. (…) I beg most of all that this is done because my priests near the border of the pagans lead an impoverished life. They can get

157 Bernhard von Simson (ed.), *Annales Mettenses priores*, MGH SRG 10 (Hanover: 1910), 40–41.

158 Tangl, no. 86, 200.

159 Tangl, no. 108, 234.

160 Tangl, no. 109, 234–36.

161 Kurze (ed.), *Annales regni Francorum*, 10; von Simson (ed.), *Annales Mettenses priores*, 44.

162 Tangl, no. 63, 131.

163 As described by Liudger, who remembered seeing Boniface pass through Utrecht in 754: "candida canicie et decrepita senectute." Liudger, *VG*, c. 10, 75.

> food to eat, but they can find no clothes there, unless they can get advice and assistance from elsewhere so that they can support and strengthen themselves in those places for the ministry of the people, just as I have helped them.[164]

With the frontier missionaries in such a vulnerable condition, the new outbreak of violence in 752 would not have helped the situation. Boniface informed the new pope, Stephen, that he had been busy rebuilding the burned churches, but it is possible that he was forced to abandon the more exposed part of the mission field. Archaeological evidence for this may have been found at the hillfort of Gaulskopf in northern Hessia, where a timber chapel had a brief existence in the 8th century before it was burned to the ground and not rebuilt.[165] Just 15 kilometres to the west, overlooking the Diemel valley, stood the hillfort of Eresburg, which by the time of Charlemagne was a major Saxon stronghold.

7 Conclusion

Given the difficulties of his final years, it would be all too easy to view Boniface's mission in central Germany as a disappointing failure. However, this ignores what he had achieved over the previous three decades. He had built, virtually from scratch, a church in a region where Christianity had been fragmented and disorganized. The bishoprics of Büraburg and Erfurt did not last, but their basic identity survived in the form of the archdiaconates of Fritzlar and Erfurt. And while it is true that his attempts to evangelise beyond the

164 Tangl, no. 93, 213–14: "Sunt enim pene omnes peregrini. Quidam presbiteri per multa loca ad ministerium ecclesiae et populorum constituti; quidam sunt monachi per celullas nostras et infantes ad legentes litteras ordinati; sunt et aliqui seniores, qui longo tempore mecum viventes laboraverunt et me adiuvabant. De his omnibus sollicitus sum, ut post obitum meum non disperdantur, sed ut habeant mercedis vestrae consilium et patrocinium celsitudinis vestrae et non sint dispersi sicut oves non habentes pastorem et populi prope marcam paganorum non perdant legem Christi (…) Propterea hoc maxime autem fieri peto, quia presbiteri mei prope marcam paganorum pauperculam vitam habeant. Panem ad manducandum adquirere possunt, sed vestimenta invenire ibi non possunt, nisi aliunde consilium et adiutorem habeant, ut sustinere et indurare in illis locis ad ministerium populi possint, eodem modo sicut ego illos adiuvavi."

165 Werner Best and Holger Löwen, "Die Ausgrabungen in der mittelalterlichen Wallburg Gaulskopf bei Warburg-Ossendorf, Kr. Höxter," *Germania* 75 (1997), 159–92.

northern borderlands failed, the structures Boniface left behind in Hessia and Thuringia would prove crucial for the eventual conversion of Saxony under Charlemagne. Central to this later mission was Fulda, which, founded in the very heart of his central German mission field, proved to be not only Boniface's final resting place, but also his greatest single legacy.

CHAPTER 13

Boniface in Bavaria

Leanne Good

1 Introduction

Boniface (then Wynfrith) arrived on the Continent in 716, just two years after the death of Pippin of Herstal unleashed a period of strife across the Frankish kingdom and its periphery. Charles Martel (r. 719–741) had established himself as the mayor of the palace and was struggling against his opponents within the kingdom as well as with peripheral duchies that wished to escape Frankish control. The Bavarian duchy in particular was entangled with, and intermittently resistant to, Frankish goals.[1] Boniface's work on the Continent coincided with the rise of the Carolingians to the royal title, and his activities both influenced and were affected by the political changes of his time. His ecclesiastical reforms cannot be studied independently of the political currents, as his work was interwoven with one of the most politically and culturally significant periods of transformation in the post-Roman world. Although Boniface's direct activities in Bavaria met with limited success, he would have a longer-term influence on the region through his role in the Carolingian reform councils.

Boniface had two extended stays in Bavaria: the first under Duke Hucbert, sometime between 732 and 736, and the second under Duke Odilo in 738/9–740. The letters of Boniface as well as Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* created an exaggerated picture of the eastern duchies as rife with heathen practice and of the church as badly in need of reform. Willibald sought to heighten Boniface's saintly credentials by stressing any pagan elements encountered in the east, and Boniface himself strove in his letters to convince the pope that the church was riddled with "false priests, adulterous presbyters or deacons, and carnal-minded clerks," as well as heretics.[2] Boniface did encounter difficulties

1 Contemporary sources refer to the *ducatus baiovariorum*, or leadership of the Bavarians. As with other early medieval polities, the emphasis was on leadership over a people rather than a strictly defined territory. The anachronistic term Bavaria is used in this article for the sake of brevity.

2 Emerton, no. 47, 78; *Concilium Romanum* (a. 745), MGH Conc. II.1, 39: "…multas iniurias et persecutiones passus sum, maxime semper a falsis sacerdotibus, ab adulteratis presbiteris seu diaconibus et fornicariis clericis. Maximus tamen mihi labor fuit contra duos hereticos pessimos." See also Tangl, nos. 26, 50, 59; Willibald, *VB*, c. 6; James T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in*

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in Bavaria, but they were primarily due to fluctuating Frankish-Bavarian political tensions that sometimes hindered his influence in the region, and entrenched local ecclesiastical traditions. Both Bavaria and Alemannia had been the site of missionary activity throughout the 7th and into the 8th century, and already had established Christian communities prior to his arrival.[3] The hagiographical depiction of a saint converting pagans and creating the Bavarian church single-handedly is false; nevertheless, Boniface did exert an influence. Throughout his career, he strove to unify and centralize the Church, to renew conciliar activity, and to focus the episcopacy on their responsibilities for pastoral care, the supervision of lower clergy, and mission. In Bavaria, his accomplishments included preaching and reform, establishing bishoprics on the Roman model, and, through his associates Willibald and Wynnebald, founding the monasteries of Eichstätt and Heidenheim. Greater still was his indirect influence through the reform of the Frankish church and the effect of his ideas on Carolingian kings. The tenets promoted by the Frankish synods of 742–747,[4] which he shaped, were adapted and furthered by Charlemagne, and the effect of these reforms transformed Europe. His insistence on a canonical and hierarchical role for bishops modeled on the Roman tradition, and his emphasis on reform and missionary activity, became central points of Carolingian reform and aided in the process of expansion and organization. After Charlemagne deposed the Bavarian duke in 788, the language of mission informed attacks on the Avars and diplomacy with Slavic princes. The newly appointed Archbishop of Salzburg, Arn, implemented Carolingian legal and organizational structures that brought the region under Frankish control. The impact of Boniface on Carolingian ideology and ecclesiastical structures, therefore, played a significant role in integrating Bavaria into the expanding Frankish empire.

Following a consideration of Boniface's goals and a brief survey of the history of the region, this essay will assess some of the problems he encountered in Bavaria: bishops ordained uncanonically, churchmen from the Irish ecclesiastical tradition, and a changing political climate that saw the Bavarian dukes and bishops distance themselves from Frankish influence at the time when Boniface was increasingly involved with Frankish reform. Finally, it will look at

a Frankish World, 690–900 (Turnhout: 2009), 128 and 154; James T. Palmer, "Defining Paganism in the Carolingian World," *EME* 15, no. 4 (2007), 407–08, and Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life:* Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050 (Harlow: 2001), 62.

3 Friedrich Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich: Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung* (*4. bis 8. Jahrhundert*) (Vienna: 1965), 210–31 on Alemannia, and 317–445 on Bavaria.

4 For more detailed discussion of the reform councils, see Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume.

the hagiographical accounts issued by Bavarian authors who sought to counter some of the claims for his influence, and the afterlife of his ideas during the Carolingian takeover at the end of the 8th century.

2 Political and Ecclesiastical History of the Bavarian Duchy

Upon his arrival on the Continent, Boniface worked with Willibrord in Frisia, until a papal letter of May 719 instructed him to pursue "missionary work and the teaching of the mystery of faith among the heathen."[5] Despite the phrasing of this directive, the work of 8th-century missionaries was not conversion primarily, but correction and teaching.[6] This involved ecclesiastical re-organization and reforming the Christian practice of areas that already had a tradition, rather than converting pagans.[7] Bavaria would prove to be one of Boniface's more frustrating fields of endeavour. Two factors complicated his work there: first, the presence of a local Christian tradition stretching back to the late antique period, and second, its political position, independent from and yet connected to the Frankish world.

The *provincia* of Bavaria referred to the sphere of influence of its duke, rather than a strictly defined territory.[8] By 696, Duke Theodo (d. 716/718) took up the Bavarian dukedom. Theodo began a renewal of the Christian organizational structure based on the existing churches and monastic cells nearest to the centres of ducal power, encouraging Frankish missionaries and supporting monastic communities.[9] Theodo also sought to strengthen connections with Rome. A notice dated 715/6 in the *Liber Pontificalis*, a compilation of papal biographies, stated that Theodo "was the first of that people to come and pray at the home of St. Peter."[10] It is likely that he went to Rome to obtain papal

5 Emerton, no. 4, 11; Tangl, no. 12, 17 : "…in laborem salutiferę praedicationis ad innotescendum gentibus incredulis mysterium fidei instanti conatu expendere."

6 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 3–4, 58–59. See also John-Henry Clay, *In the Shadow of Death: Saint Boniface and the Conversion of Hessia, 721–54* (Turnhout: 2010), 238–242; Lutz E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung: Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: 1995).

7 Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow: 2000), 126.

8 In the 8th century, this roughly encompassed the area of today's Ober- and Niederbayern, and part of Oberpfalz.

9 These efforts are recorded in the *Notitia Arnonis* (ca. 788–790) and *Breves Notitiae* (ca. 798–800), registers of land grants to the Salzburg episcopal see compiled in order to secure its rights after the Carolingian takeover.

10 *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes* (*Liber pontificalis*)*: The Ancient Biographies of Nine Popes from AD 715 to AD 817*, trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool: 1992), c. 91.4, 5. This visit was reported by Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, MGH SRG 48, 4.44, 232.

authority for the reorganization of the church in Bavaria on the model of the Roman church.[11] The plan was not carried out due to Theodo's death.[12] Dynastic strife between Theodo's remaining heirs, his son Grimoald and grandson Hucbert, divided Bavaria until Charles Martel intervened in support of Hucbert in 725. Charles carried back to the Frankish kingdom Grimoald's wife Pilitrud, and her niece, Swanahild, and then took Swanahild as his second wife.[13] Hucbert became sole ruler in 728,[14] and when he died in 736/7, Charles Martel arranged the installation of Odilo, the son of Duke Gottfrid of Alemannia and a relative of Swanahild.[15] Odilo set out to reinforce his authority in Bavaria, reviving Theodo's plans for the organization of episcopal seats, to be carried out by the papal envoy Boniface.

3 Boniface in Bavaria

His venture with Odilo was Boniface's third sojourn in this land south of the Danube. Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* related that Boniface had first crossed the territory of the Bavarians in 719, on his way to Thuringia. The second visit occurred when, after establishing the monasteries at Fritzlar and Amöneburg (ca. 732), he travelled to Bavaria "where Hugobert [sic] was then duke."[16] During this visit, he preached and visited churches, and condemned one Eremwulf

11 *Litterae Gregorii II papae decretales*, MGH Leges 3, 451–54 is a set of instructions to three clerics who were to carry out the plan, although the authenticity of the letter is disputed. See Stephan Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern zu den Karolingern: Bayerns Bischöfe zwischen Kirchenorganisation, Reichsintegration und Karolingischer Reform (700–847)* (Munich: 2004), 34–42 for a discussion of the letter. Carl I. Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum": Ruling Bavaria under the Merovingians and Early Carolingians* (Turnhout: 2007), 73, argues for its authenticity.

12 See Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern,* 33 and Joachim Jahn, *Ducatus Baiuvariorum: Das Bairische Herzogtum der Agilolfinger* (Stuttgart: 1991), 30.

13 Fredegar, *Continuationes*, MGH SRM 2, c. 12, 175. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel,* 108.

14 Arbeo, *VC*, c. 31 recounted the death of Grimoald, and Hucbert was mentioned as sole duke in the *Breves Notitiae*, *Notitia Arnonis*, and Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*.

15 Erich Zöllner convincingly argued that Odilo was a member of the Alemannic ducal family in "Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger," *MIÖG* 59 (1951), 245–64 and "Das Geschlecht der Agilolfinger," in *Die Anfänge des Klosters Kremsmünster: Symposion, 15.-18. Mai 1977,* ed. Siegfried Haider (Linz: 1978), 83–110. See also Jorg Jarnut, "Studien über Duke Odilo," *MIÖG* 85 (1977), 273–84.

16 Willibald, *VB*, trans. Talbot, c. 6, in *Soldiers of Christ*, 129. Willibald, *VB*, c. 6, 35: "Hisque omnibus rite confectis, Baguariorum temporibus Hugoberti ducis adiit terras." See Clay, *In the Shadow of Death,* 201–02 for the dating of the monastic foundations.

for his heretical opinions.[17] Since Hucbert's death was in 736/7, this visit can be roughly dated to the period of 732–736. By 737, Boniface was again in Rome, where he met Gregory III. A letter from Boniface in 738 explained that he was waiting in Rome to attend a papal synod, and his *vita* notes that many Franks and Bavarians were at the papal court.[18] Some of these courtiers must have encouraged Boniface to go to Bavaria. We know from a series of letters that he hoped to go to Saxony after Charles Martel's victory there, but there is no firm evidence that he went at this time.[19] After receiving an invitation from Odilo, Boniface arrived at the duke's court in 738/9 to aid in the restructuring of the ecclesiastical organization of his duchy. Gregory III sent a letter of introduction, addressing the bishops of the "provincia baioariorum et alamannia": Uuigo, Liudo, Rydolt, Phyphylo, and Adda.[20] The letter confirmed the presence of bishops in the region prior to Boniface's arrival; it also enjoined the bishops to receive Boniface as his representative, and to reject false, heretical, or adulterous priests and "Britons who come to you."[21] Boniface was instructed to consecrate any irregularly-ordained priests, and confirm anyone baptized by a different rite, provided they were baptized in the name of the Trinity.[22]

The prospects for Boniface's reform were good, as the process of ecclesiastical restructuring had begun under Theodo and his sons and the Bavarian church was already in contact with Rome. Ducal support seemed assured; the *Vita Bonifatii* stated that Boniface was there by the invitation of Duke Odilo.[23] His arrival promised to achieve several goals for the duke: to reform the Bavarian church, to establish closer ties to the pope, and to give Odilo, who had been installed so recently, additional legitimacy in the eyes of the local nobles. By placing himself at the head of the hierarchy that structured the church, the

17 Willibald, *VB*, c. 6.

18 Tangl, no. 41; Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

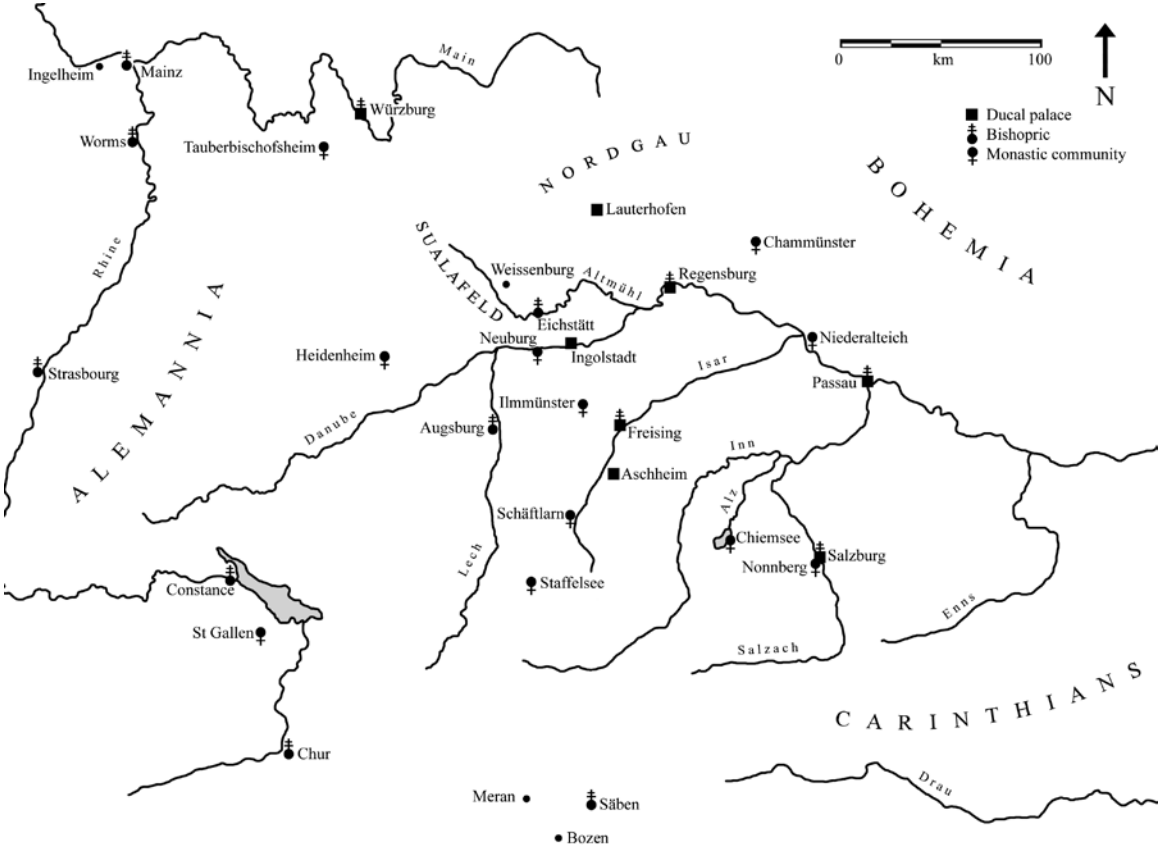
19 Tangl, nos. 46–47. See Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954, repr. Darmstadt: 1980), 179–80. Clay, *In the Shadow of Death*, 206–18, discusses the scholarship on this issue. He concludes that Boniface did partake in a Saxon mission at this time.

20 Tangl, no. 44. Phyphylo was Vivilo of Passau, the only certain identification of the five. Adda was likely Heddo of Strassburg, who cooperated with Odilo in founding Niederaltaich, and Liudo may have been the *episcopus vacans* mentioned in the *Libellus Virgilii.* Uuigo may have been bishop of either Regensburg or Augsburg and Rydolt has variously been ascribed to Augsburg, Freising, and Constance. For these identifications, see: Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern,* 55, n. 163.

21 Emerton, no. 34, 49; Tangl, no. 44, 71 : "Et gentilitatis ritum et doctrinum vel venientium Brittonum vel falsorum sacerdotum hereticorum sive adulteros aut undecumque sint rennuentes ac prohibentes abiciatis."

22 Tangl, no. 45.

23 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.



MAP 13.1 Bavaria in the time of Boniface

duke reinforced his position at the head of Bavarian society.[24] Boniface worked for two years, preaching and reforming clerical practice, and establishing Bavarian bishoprics on the Roman model. The following decade of his life would be the busiest of his career, as he established episcopal seats not only in Bavaria but also in central Germany and coordinated the Frankish church councils of ca. 742–7.

4 Establishment of Bishoprics

According to his letters and his *vita*, Boniface consecrated three bishops in Bavaria and divided the province into four dioceses. In 739, Pope Gregory III congratulated Boniface on his reported accomplishments:

> You inform us that you have visited the Bavarian people and found that they were not living in accordance with the prescriptions of the Church, that there was but one bishop in that province, a certain Vivilo, whom we ordained a long time ago, and that you have, with the approval of Odilo duke of those same Bavarians, and of the nobles of that province, ordained three other bishops.[25]

However, the re-organization was not as clear-cut as he reported. Boniface confronted two difficulties in the creation of canonical episcopal seats: the interests of the duke and local noble families in the selection of these bishops, and the presence of supernumerary bishops.

As noted in Gregory's letter, the new bishops were ordained with the agreement of Odilo and the nobles, which limited the papal legate in his choices.[26] The episcopal seat of Passau was already occupied; Vivilo was one of the five bishops addressed in Pope Gregory's earlier letter of introduction.[27] Boniface appears to have expressed his disapproval of the Bishop of Passau in a letter to Gregory, since the pope's response stressed that he had personally ordained

24 Jahn, *DB*, 169.

25 Emerton, no. 35, 50–51; Tangl, no. 45, 72: "Igitur quia indicasti perrexisse te ad gentem Baioariorum et invenisse eos extra ordinem ęcclesiasticum viventes, dum episcopos non habebant in provincia nisi unum nomine Uiuilo, quem nos ante tempus ordinavimus, et quia cum assensu Otile ducis eorundem Baioariorum seu optimatum provinciae illius tres alios ordinasses episcopos."

26 Palmer suggests that as many as three of the bishops were already in office in *Anglo-Saxons,* 154.

27 Emerton, no. 34; Tangl, no. 44.

Vivilo, and that if there was anything not according to the Roman tradition, Boniface should simply "instruct and correct" him.[28] Franz Flaskamp suggested that Boniface had intended to take Passau as his permanent metropolitan see, which may explain his dismay at finding it occupied.[29]

Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* named the appointed bishops as Johannes in Salzburg, Gauzbald in Regensburg, and Erembert in Freising.[30] At Salzburg, the sole charter from the tenure of Johannes describes his receipt of a church dedicated to St John on the River Alz, which may indicate family holdings centred on the nearby Chiemsee.[31] Carl Hammer noted that Johannes was associated with a group bearing Latin names, suggesting he was a member of a local Roman kin-group.[32] The presence of *romani*, families ethnically distinguished from Bavarians in the contemporary sources, is attested in the Salzburg region. These families are thought to have been remnants of the earlier Roman administration of the region, and some were linked in service to the ducal family, such as Ursus, the chaplain of Duke Odilo. Although the *Vita Bonifatii* suggested that Johannes was the first bishop in this see, the later *Liber Vitae* of Salzburg named Rupert, Vitalis, and Flobrigisus each as "bishop and abbot" before Johannes.[33] Either these predecessors were anachronistically called bishops, as part of a later, anti-Carolingian effort to claim that Bavaria had an episcopal tradition before Boniface, or their inclusion reflected a Bavarian tradition of Salzburg abbots who exercised episcopal liturgical powers, similar to the tradition in Ireland.

In Regensburg and Freising, Boniface's appointed bishops, Gauzbald and Erembert, also came from local noble families. Bishop Gauzbald held office in Regensburg for twenty-four years, and would support Odilo in his conflict with

28 Tangl, no. 5, 73: "Et si aliquid excedit extra canonicam regulam, doce et corrige eum iuxta Romanę ęcclesiae traditionem, quam a nobis accepisti." Emerton, no. 35, 51: "If, then, he has in any way gone beyond the canonical rule, instruct and correct him according to the tradition of the Roman Church as you received it from us."

29 Franz Flaskamp, "Der Bonifatiusbrief von Herford: Ein angebliches Zeugnis zur Sachsenmission," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 44 (1962), 326–27. The presence of the bishop also suggests the significance of Passau as an ecclesiastical center, as investigated by Carl I. Hammer in "'For All the Saints': Bishop Vivolo of Passau and the Eighth-Century Origins of the Feast," *Revue Mabillon*, n.s., t. 15 (2004), 5–26.

30 Willibald, *VB*, c.7.

31 *Salzburger Urkundenbuch, 1: Traditionskodizes*, ed. Willibald Hauthaler (Salzburg: 1910, repr. Aalen: 1987), no. 2, 51. See Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 78.

32 Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 78.

33 The *Liber Vitae,* the confraternity book of Salzburg composed around 784, listed names of those included in the monastery's prayer confraternity. *Liber confraternitatum s. Petri Salisburgensis vetustior,* MGH Necr. 2, ed. Sigismund Herzberg-Fränkel (Berlin: 1904).

Charles Martel's sons, Pippin and Carloman, in 743.[34] Gauzbald belonged to the powerful local family of Adalunc, who exercised influence around Regensburg as well as in Passau, Freising, and the Nordgau.[35] Another Regensburg bishop, Sindperht (762/3–791), also came from this family.[36] The estate at Lindhart, where Boniface, Willibald, and Suidger met prior to the foundation of Eichstätt, was one of the properties of this extended family. As was the case with Salzburg, the later *Liber Vitae* named episcopal predecessors to Gauzbald in Regensburg, St Emmeram and Erhard. Erhard was also described in the *Vita Odiliae* as a Bavarian bishop.[37]

The see of Freising was occupied by Erembert, who came from the circle of the 7th-century Christianizer Corbinian, once a pivotal figure at the Bavarian court.[38] This association must have supported Erembert's claim to the episcopal seat. Joachim Jahn suggested the bishop was related to the Mochinger, as members of this group later held a church of St Martin that had belonged previously to Erembert.[39] The Mochinger, in addition to the noble families of the Huosi and the Fagana, had great influence in this region.

Each of these candidates must have been selected after negotiations between Odilo, Boniface, and the noble families, although there are signs that the establishment of these canonical *sedes* disturbed a delicate balance in Bavaria. The *Vita Bonifatii* noted that when Boniface came to Bavaria, he found men who had "arrogated to themselves the dignity of bishops."[40] In his letter to Gregory III, however, Boniface claimed that there were no bishops in the region save for Vivilo, discounting any bishop not associated with his canonically established episcopal seats.

34 *Annales Mettenses priores*, MGH SRG 10, ed. Bernhard von Simson (Hanover: 1905), a.742, 34: "Qui patrata victoria in presentiam invictorum principum perductus fuit una cum Gauzebaldo episcopo."

35 Josef Widemann (ed.), *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Regensburg und des Klosters S. Emmeram,* Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen Geschichte n.s. 8. (Munich: 1943), TR 1, 5, and 6.

36 Jahn, *DB*, 155.

37 *Vita Odiliae abbatissae Hohenburgensis*, MGH SRM 6, c. 4, 40.

38 Arbeo, *VC*, c. 30. See Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 78.

39 Jahn, *DB,* 149–54. See Freising charters TF 234a (Erembert) and TF 235 in Theodor Bitterauf (ed.), *Die Traditionen des Hochstifts Freising*, Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen Geschichte n.f. 4 (Munich: 1905), 28–29, an edition of the Freising cartulary manuscript in the Bayerischen Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich: BayHStA HL Freising 3a. Subsequent references will give charter numbers to Bitterauf's edition, abbreviated TF.

40 Willibald, *VB*, c.7, 37: "Quorum alii pridem falso se episcopatus gradu praetulerunt." Trans. Talbot, in *Soldiers of Christ,* 130.

Although it remains uncertain if there were, in fact, predecessors in the four episcopal seats established by Boniface, there were certainly supernumerary bishops in the region, both in the period when Boniface worked in Bavaria, and after. The lack of a metropolitan in the region had left it receptive to the presence of bishops who exercised their office by wandering, ordaining priests and dedicating churches at the request of local nobles and abbots. *Chorepiscopi*, rural bishops who generally assisted an urban bishop, were sometimes created irregularly in the 8th century and "wandered," without fixed sees. Well into the 9th century, this remnant of late antique ecclesiastical organization created tension among bishops by undercutting their authority, and was part of the impetus for the pseudo-Isidorian forgeries that sought to curtail their power.[41] The term *episcopi vagantes* was given to persons who were consecrated as bishops without an established church, supposedly in an irregular manner or outside canon law, and who were not in communion with any recognized diocese.[42] There were also abbots and monks endowed with the liturgical powers associated with episcopal rank, exercising the functions of consecration and ordination. This was a tradition strong in Ireland, where the spiritual offices of a bishop were often carried out by an abbot or abbess.[43] The Salzburg Confraternity Book named many of the early abbots of St Peter's monastery as *episcopus et abbas*, suggesting a practice of monastic bishops in underdeveloped areas lacking urban centres. The *chorepiscopi*, *episcopi vacantes*, and monastic bishops who had worked in Bavaria and formed relationships with local elites (or who were members of those families) found their offices limited by Boniface's attempts to anchor episcopal functions to four diocesan sees, and to establish canonical rules where there had previously been relationships.

Both *episcopi vagantes* and monastic bishops appear to have been represented in the Bavarian Christian tradition. Virgil, an Irish *peregrinus*, turned up in the Frankish court of Pippin III in 743/4, and was sent on to Bavaria.[44] He

41 Roger E. Reynolds, "The Organization, Law, and Liturgy of the Western Church, 700–900," in *New Cambridge Medieval History,* vol. 2, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge: 1995), 607 and 616.

42 See *episcopi vagantes* in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford: 2006).

43 Pádraig P. Ó Néill, "Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen," in *Virgil von Salzburg: Missionar und Gelehrter. Beiträge des Internationalen Symposiums vom 21.-24. September 1984 in der Salzburger Residenz*, ed. Heinz Dopsch and Roswitha Juffinger (Salzburg: 1985), 79.

44 Fritz Lošek (ed.), *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und der Brief des Erzbischofs Theotmar von Salzburg* (Hanover: 1997), c. 2, 100–01. The *Conversio* gives the only account of Virgil's arrival; it is problematic because of its late composition date and the very late date (767) given for his episcopal consecration. However, it contains information

had been present in Salzburg for a year or two when Johannes, the bishop ordained by Boniface, died in June 745.[45] Virgil, who became abbot of the monastery of Saint Peter in 747/8, was accompanied by the bishop Dobdagrecus, who appears to have carried out episcopal functions under his direction.[46] When Virgil then became bishop of Salzburg in 749, Dobdagrecus took over the leadership of the monastery of Chiemsee. The two Irishmen represented a different episcopal tradition than that promoted by Boniface, which would lead to later conflicts between them. Part of Boniface's reform was to insist that the only valid bishops were those installed in an episcopal seat based in a *civitas* (city), on the Roman model.

Around 747, Virgil and Liudo, one of the bishops addressed by the pope in his letter to the bishops of Bavaria and Alemannia, became involved in a controversy involving the cell of St Maximilian.[47] The *Libellus Virgilii* used the term "*episcopus vacans*" to describe Liudo.[48] The dating of the papal letter shows that he had been present in Bavaria at least since 738. The monastic cell of St Maximilian, originally dedicated in the time of Duke Theodo, had been destroyed by Slavic incursions, and Duke Odilo wished to refound it. The duke gave the site as a benefice to his chaplain, Ursus, a member of the Albina family who had been involved in the monastery's first foundation. However, Virgil protested to the duke that the site belonged to the monastery of St Peter. Virgil and Ursus built competing churches in the area, and Odilo had the church of Ursus dedicated by the *episcopus vagans* Liudo, after which Virgil excommunicated Ursus. Although Liudo had been recognized as a bishop by the pope himself in his letter, he cannot be identified with any fixed location. Nevertheless, he was deemed an acceptable choice for the dedication of a church supported by a duke.

If Dobdagrecus was carrying out episcopal functions during this period, along with Virgil and Liudo, then there were three non-canonical bishops active in the Salzburg area at the same time. It seems Virgil initially was exercising authority as an Irish-style abbot, to Boniface's dismay.[49] However, Virgil later

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from earlier sources. It relates that it was Pippin who installed Virgil as bishop. In contrast, the *Breves Notitiae* (*BN*) c. 8.5, 98 (ca. 800) stated that Odilo made Virgil bishop.

45 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 145.

46 The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* called him *proprius episcopus*, c. 2, 100.

47 Tangl, no. 44.

48 *BN*, c. 8.10. The *Breves Notitiae* was based on the earlier *Libellus Virgilii*, which was presumably composed for Bishop Virgil during his tenure. See Herwig Wolfram, "*Libellus Virgilii*: Ein quellenkritisches Problem der ältesten Salzburger Güterverzeichnisse," in *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel zur Gründungszeit*, ed. Arno Borst (Sigmaringen: 1974), 177–214.

49 Most scholars place Virgil's abbacy as occurring 747/8, and his elevation to bishop in June 749. Odilo died in 748, so the excommunication of Ursus must have occurred while Virgil was still abbot. Either he was functioning as a kind of abbot-bishop at St Peter's prior to

laid claim to one of the four episcopal seats created by Boniface, indicating his recognition of the greater authority that became inherent in the canonically established office, as a new definition of bishop was introduced in Bavaria.[50]

The Freising area also had examples of supernumerary bishops, even after Boniface's reorganization. Two names, Manno and Oadalhart, were connected with a bishopric at Neuburg on the Danube. Manno appeared in the Freising cartulary, in a donation by Chunipert in 759/60.[51] A list of bishops from Augsburg named him before Wicterp, a historically attested bishop active around 738–754.[52] A later addition to the *Vita Bonifatii* stated that Manno was the fourth bishop in *Nova civitate* (Neuburg), so his predecessor must have been contemporary with Boniface's stay.[53] His successor, Oadalhart, was titled *episcopus* in 784,[54] and he continued to appear in local documents up until 808.[55]

The presence of Oadalhart shows that the development of episcopal seats into dioceses was a process not completely established until the 9th century, despite Boniface's claims. Joachim Jahn speculated that Manno and Oadalhart worked in an "episcopal grey zone" between Freising and Augsburg, tied to a locally ruling noble group, similar to Bishop Liudo and the Albina kin group in the Salzburg region. Manno and Oadalhart may have been "personal" bishops of the Huosi family, at a small monastic, quasi-episcopal church in Staffelsee.[56]

A second example of supernumerary bishops from the Freising region was that of Waltrich and his successor Petto, who were both designated as bishops in the Schäftlarn donation records.[57] The monastery of Schäftlarn was founded by the priest Waltrich and his family around 760–764, and no bishop of

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his canonical elevation to a bishop, or the depiction of Virgil as a canonical bishop was heightened retroactively in the *Notitia Arnonis* and *Breves Notitiae*.

50 Tangl, no. 80.

51 TF 15.

52 *Series episcoporum Augustanorum*, MGH SS 13, 334.

53 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7. Neuberg on the Danube (*Nova civitate*) was joined with Augsburg around 800 by Charlemagne. See Jahn, *DB*, 404–06.

54 TF 118.

55 In 804 Oadalhart took part in the translation of Saint Quirinus to the monastery of Tegernsee (TF 197). He also appeared at a court day in Gars am Inn in 807, witnessing legal conflicts involving the Freising cathedral (TF 258). A number of documents show Oadalhart in a leading position, appearing at times as a representative of the Freising cathedral, after Bishop Atto: TF 267, 268a, 273.

56 Jahn, *DB*, 167.

57 Alois Weissthanner (ed.), *Die Traditionen des Klosters Schäftlarn 1: 760–1305*, Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte 10.1 (Munich: 1953), TS 3 and 18. Waltrich was last mentioned as the head of Schäftlarn in the year 779 (TS 6). On Waltrich, see Ludwig Holzfurtner, *Gründung und Gründungsüberlieferung: Quellenkritische Studien*

Freising played a role in any of the donations to Schäftlarn in the 8th century. Thus, there appear to have been competing traditions of episcopal authority in the duchy, which were to become homogenized under the Roman model during the 8th century, as a result of Boniface's influence and Carolingian favour.

Boniface's establishment of canonical episcopal seats seems to have upset both the ecclesiastical and political elite.[58] Rather than creating support for Odilo, the attempt at reform initially had the opposite effect. Resentment against Odilo was strong enough that he was expelled from Bavaria between August 740 and March 741, and went to the Frankish court.[59] After his sojourn amongst the Franks, Odilo returned to Bavaria with Charles Martel's daughter, Hiltrud.[60] Their son Tassilo was born in 741, the same year that Charles Martel died. During Odilo's absence from Bavaria, Boniface probably returned to central Germany, as he established three new bishoprics there in the autumn of 741, at Würzburg, Erfurt, and Büraburg.

Upon his return, it appears Odilo began to distance himself from Boniface and the episcopal organization he had created. The duke began a programme of monastic foundations; between Odilo and Tassilo, approximately fourteen monasteries were founded, while the duke simultaneously supported monastic foundations by Bavarian noble families. In contrast, Duke Odilo gave few properties to the new episcopal churches, and the bishops had little involvement with these new monasteries. Although bishops were present at church dedications and at some donations, either as witnesses or to perform consecrations, there is little evidence that they exercised authority over the abbots or the property of Bavarian monasteries in the mid-8th century. Odilo's foundations were consecrated with the involvement of bishops from outside Bavaria, sending a message that his foundations were exempt from the diocesan

zur Gründungsgeschichte der bayerischen Klöster der Agilolfingerzeit und ihrer hochmittelalterlichen Überlieferung (Kallmünz: 1984), 212–15.

58 Jahn and Wolfram connected Odilo's expulsion to the problems of church reform. Jahn proposed that one reason for Boniface's lack of success was that Odilo continued to protect supernumerary bishops in his province. Jahn, *DB*, 172; Herwig Wolfram, *Grenzen und Räume: Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung*, Österreichische Geschichte, vol. 1: 378–907 (Vienna: 1995), 111.

59 Odilo's expulsion was described in *BN*, c. 7.5. For the dates of Odilo's stay at the Frankish court, see Jarnut, "Studien über Herzog Odilo," 283.

60 Fredegar, *Continuationes,* MGH SRM 2, c. 25–26, 180. See also Ann. Mett., MGH SRG 10, a. 742–43, 33.

structure.[61] His devotion of resources into monasteries allowed the duke to maintain control over the ecclesiastical structure in Bavaria.

5 Eichstätt and Heidenheim

The foundation of Eichstätt illustrates the complexity of evolving Frankish-Bavarian politics that Boniface needed to negotiate. Boniface and his associate, Willibald, had cooperated with Odilo in its establishment prior to the duke's expulsion in August 740. Willibald was dedicated as a bishop in 741, but contemporary sources continued to describe Eichstätt as a monastery after that date. Although it became an episcopal seat at the time of Willibald's successor, the nature of Willibald's episcopacy is difficult to ascertain.

Willibald and his brother Wynnebald came from England, and their biographer, Hygeburg of Heidenheim, claimed they were related to Boniface.[62] The two brothers travelled to the Continent together, on a pilgrimage to Rome. Wynnebald received a request from Boniface to help in his work and went to Thuringia to be consecrated as a priest, while Willibald travelled extensively in the east and then settled at Monte Cassino. Eventually, he was summoned north by Boniface, as well.[63]

According to his *vita*, Willibald went to Bavaria and stayed with Odilo for a week. Presumably, Odilo granted ducal *licentia* to found a monastery, for he was then sent to a noble named Suidger. Together, Suidger and Willibald went to Lindhart, a family estate where Boniface was staying.[64] From there they went to inspect land that Suidger owned in the region *Eihstat*. Suidger then gave the territory to Boniface, who made it over to Willibald.

Suidger's family had extensive landholdings in the region.[65] Boniface had connected with this important kin-group during his stays in Bavaria, perhaps as early as his first visit there: his Bavarian disciple Sturm, the later abbot of

61 As at Niederaltaich, which was established with the support of the bishop of Strasbourg, Heddo. Heinrich Tiefenbach,"Die Namen des *Breviarius Urolfi*: Mit einer Textedition und zwei Karten," in *Ortsname und Urkunde: Frühmittelalterliche Ortsnamenüberlieferung,* ed. Rudolf Schützeichel (Heidelberg: 1990), 86.

62 Hygeburg, a nun who joined the double monastery of Heidenheim around 761, wrote hagiographical accounts of the two brothers sometime before the death of Willibald in 786, asserting that she had taken down Willibald's story from his own mouth. Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 6.

63 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 7.

64 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5.

65 See Gottfried Mayr, *Studien zum Adel im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern* (Munich: 1974), 4–11.

Fulda whom he had placed in the abbey of Fritzlar as a boy, also had links with this family.[66] According to the *vita*, after Willibald and Suidger surveyed the land, they rejoined Boniface at Freising. Odilo's role in the foundation seems assured, since Freising was the location of an important ducal palace.[67] Boniface ordained Willibald as a priest on 22 July 740.[68] The following year, Boniface summoned Willibald to Thuringia, where he was reunited with his brother. He was then consecrated as bishop in 741 at Sülzenbrücken, near Erfurt.[69]

Willibald may have been intended for the see of Erfurt, until conditions changed. Situated east of Fulda in a region bordering the Slavs, Erfurt may have appeared increasingly unlikely to be able to support an episcopal seat. At the same time, Eichstätt was becoming a politically strategic centre.[70] Willibald's consecration date of 22 October 741 was nearly contemporaneous with the death of Charles Martel; Boniface could not have predicted this event, but the political uncertainty of that year is reflected in a letter that sought protection for his work in Thuringia from Grifo, the son of Charles Martel and his Bavarian wife, Swanahild.[71] After the death of the Frankish *maior domus*, plans for expansion in Thuringia must have appeared less viable in light of the growing

66 Wilhelm Störmer, "Eine Adelsgruppe um die Fuldaer Äbte Sturmi und Eigil und des Bishofs Baturich von Regensburg in Fulda," in *Gesellschaft und Herrschaft: Forschungen zu sozial- und landesgeschichtlichen Problemen vornehmlich in Bayern,* ed. R. van Dülmen (Munich: 1969), 1–34.

67 Wilhelm Störmer, "Die bayerische Herzogskirche," in *Der hl. Willibald – Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer?*, ed. Harald Dickerhof (Regensburg: 1990), 128.

68 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5. Date per Kurt Reindel, "Das Zeitalter der Agilolfinger: Christentum und Kirche," in *Handbuch der bayerische Geschichte*, 1, ed. Max Spindler (Munich: 1981), 232.

69 Hygeburg, *VWill*, c. 5. The date of his consecration could plausibly have been in 742, if one accepts a date of 743 for the *Concilium Germanicum*. David Parsons discusses the reasons for a later dating in "Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence," *EME* 8, no. 1 (1999), 39–40.

70 There has been much scholarly debate over whether the institution founded at Eichstätt was a monastic or episcopal centre, or both; or whether Willibald was initially made bishop of Erfurt and later moved to Eichstätt; see Arnold Angenendt, "Willibald zwischen Mönchtum und Bischofsamt," in *Der hl. Willibald: Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer?*, 167–69; Alfred Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Eichstätt, 1: Die Bischofsreihe bis 1535*, Germania Sacra, NF 45, Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz (Berlin: 2006), 19–31; Gerhard Pfeiffer, "Erfurt oder Eichstätt?: Zur Biographie des Bischofs Willibald," in *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger, Pt. 2,* ed. Helmut Beumann (Cologne: 1974), 137–61.

71 Tangl, no. 48, 77: "Obsecro et adiuro … ut si tibi Deus potestatem donaverit, ut adiuvare studeas servos Dei sacerdotes, presbiteros, qui sunt in Thuringia"; Emerton, no. 38, 54: "I beseech and beg your favour … that if God gives you the power, you will aid the servants of God in Thuringia." This letter was not part of the collection assembled at Mainz in the late 8th century, but appears in two 9th-century collections.

tension between the peripheral duchies and the new Frankish mayors, Charles Martel's elder sons, Pippin and Carloman.

Eichstätt, on the other hand, soon became a valuable site in the changing political situation. Pippin and Carloman clearly intended to hold onto the mayoral position. but the duchies of Alemannia, Provence, and Aquitaine, along with some Saxon and Slavic leaders, resisted their claims to Frankish control over their communities. Anti-Carolingian opposition united the periphery of the Merovingian kingdom: Odilo became a leader in this resistance, and Bavarian policy became increasingly anti-Frankish. When Pippin and Carloman tried to shut out their half-brother Grifo, whose mother Swanahild was a kinswoman of Odilo, the Bavarian duke supported his claims. Grifo occupied Laon, until he was captured and imprisoned by Carloman.[72] In light of his own contact with Grifo, and the growing tension between the Frankish mayors and the Bavarians, Boniface may have sought to strengthen his ties with Carloman.[73] He was also focused on bringing about the Concilium Germanicum, which Carloman supported. Boniface and his consecrated bishops, Burchard of Würzburg, Wintan of Büraburg, and Willibald, comprised four of the seven attendees to the first council on 21 April 742; no Bavarian bishop attended.[74] At the council, Boniface was elevated to metropolitan over the eastern part of Carloman's kingdom, thereby becoming part of the Frankish church.[75]

For his part, Odilo appears to have sought a new papal legate for Bavaria from Pope Zachary, who had ascended to the papacy in December, 741. The pope appointed Sergius, who was captured by the Franks in 743, when Pippin and Carloman combined their military forces for an attack on Bavaria. The pro-Carolingian *Annales Mettenses Priores* stated that the day before the battle Sergius had, under Odilo's orders, attempted to persuade the Franks to leave Bavaria "as if on the order of the pope."[76] It is possible that Zachary, seeking allies in the confused days after Charles Martel's death, supported Odilo in this confrontation.[77]

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72 Ann. Mett., MGH SRG 10, a. 741, 32–33; *Annales regni Francorum, inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829: qui dicuntur Annales laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, MGH SRG 6, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Hanover: 1895), a. 747–53, 6–10.

73 Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 90.

74 Tangl, no. 56.

75 In the acts of the Roman Synod of 745 (Tangl, no. 59), he is termed "archiepiscopus provinciae Germaniae." Reinhold Kaiser, "Bistumsgründung und Kirchenorganisation im 8. Jahrhundert," in *Der hl. Willibald: Klosterbischof oder Bistumsgründer?*, 61.

76 Ann. Mett., MGH SRG. 10, a. 743, 34.

77 Hammer suggests that his presence may have been related to the creation of a new diocese at Neuberg/Staffelsee. Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 62, note 25. However, he may have been intended as a replacement for Boniface, now metropolitan of Carloman's

In response to the Frankish attack, Odilo retreated towards the east. It is likely that after the war of 743, Odilo was forced to cede to the Franks the area around Eichstätt, along with ducal courts at Ingolstadt and Lauterhofen.[78] These three sites had been part of the Nordgau, the region under Bavarian control north of the Danube, which formed the frontier between the Franks and the Bavarians. The position of Eichstätt was strategically significant, as it sat at the crossing of the Altmühl River on the route from Worms to Regensburg.[79] This may have been the reason for Willibald's return to Eichstätt, to secure the property in the unsettled days after Charles Martel's death, perhaps in anticipation of the military conflict. Eichstätt was placed under the direction of Mainz; that is, under Carolingian control, although it was not fully integrated into the diocesan system until the 9th century. The *Vita Bonifatii* noted that Boniface divided the churches of the Frankish-Bavarian border region, which had been under Odilo's control previously, between Willibald and Burchard of Würzburg.[80]

Meanwhile, Bishop Willibald's brother, Wynnebald, continued Boniface's work in Bavaria, with the support of Odilo, from approximately 744 to 747.[81] The *Vita Wynnebaldi* noted that Odilo granted an estate to Wynnebald, in the region *Nordfilusa*.[82] Hammer proposed that Boniface may have mediated the peace between Odilo and Carloman, as an explanation for Odilo's support for Wynnebald so soon after the Frankish-Bavarian military conflict of 743.[83] Wynnebald worked several years in Bavaria, while Boniface concentrated increasingly on activities in the Frankish kingdom. He secured land from

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eastern provinces. Heinz Löwe, "Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern," in *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, ed. Karl Bosl, Wege der Forschung 60 (Darmstadt: 1965), 287.

78 Jahn, DB, 162. Both the *Vita Willibaldi* and *Vita Bonifatii* state that the region of Eichstätt was in the province of Bavaria. The evidence for the transfer is circumstantial, and the exact date it occurred is unknown: Charlemagne's *Divisio Regnorum* of 806 stated that the two palaces were from the part of Bavaria called the Nordgau. It adds that they were once held by Tassilo as a benefice, part of the Carolingian rhetoric to portray the Bavarian dukedom as a vassalage of the Carolingian kings. MGH Cap. I, Nr. 45, 127, c. 2–3.

79 Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 83.

80 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8.

81 The *Vita Wynnebaldi* stated he was in Bavaria three years. Assuming Odilo died in early 748, this was probably 744–747. Hygeburg, *VWyn,* c. 5–6.

82 Hygeburg, *VWyn,* c. 5. Maximilian Diesenberger gives this location as modern Oberpfalz on the Vils in *Predigt und Politik im fruhmittelalterlichen Bayern: Arn von Salzburg, Karl der Grossen, und die Salzburger Sermones-Sammlung* (Berlin: 2015), 204.

83 Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum,"* 90. The *Annales Mosellani* reported that they made peace in 744: "pax inter Carlomannus et Hodilone facta." *Annales Mosellani,* ed. I. Lappenberg, MGH SS 16, 495.

Carloman for the foundation of Fulda by his Bavarian follower, Sturm.[84] In 745, Pope Zachary bestowed on Boniface the see of Cologne; Boniface then transferred to Mainz in 751.[85] Wynnebald rejoined Boniface and preached in the Mainz region, until he decided on the monastic life.[86]

Wynnebald went to the monastery of Eichstätt, and, with the advice of his brother Bishop Willibald, bought Heidenheim in the Sualafeld, where he founded a monastery in 752.[87] A third member of Boniface's Anglo-Saxon circle, a Fulda monk named Sola, established a hermitage in the Altmühl valley between Heidenheim and Eichstätt around 750.[88] The foundation of new monasteries in the Frankish-Bavarian borderlands by members of Boniface's circle had political ramifications, further intensifying the region's connection with the Nordgau.

6 Conflicts with Virgil

Boniface spent most of the 740's in the Frankish kingdom, participating in the reform synods and directing affairs as archbishop. Yet he remained involved in the affairs of the Bavarian church. In 744, Pope Zachary renewed Boniface's status as legate to Bavaria, despite having sent Sergius the year prior. In response to an inquiry from Boniface, the pope responded:

> You desire to know whether you are to have the right of preaching in Bavaria which was granted you by our predecessor. We reply that we will not diminish but rather increase the rights bestowed upon you by our predecessor. So long as divine majesty shall permit you to live, carry on as our representative not only in Bavaria but in the whole province of Gaul the preaching mission with which you are charged, and if you discover anything contrary to the Christian religion or the provisions of the canons, strive to reform such errors according to the law of justice.[89]

84 Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, MGH SS 2, 365–77, c. 12–13.

85 Tangl, no. 60 (Cologne); Tangl, no. 88 (Mainz).

86 Hygeburg, *VWyn,* c. 5–6.

87 Hygeburg, *VWyn*, c. 7.

88 *Vita Sualonis*, ed. A. Bauch in *Quellen zur Geschichte der Diözese Eichstätt, 1: Biographien der Gründungszeit*, Eichstätter Studien NF 19, 2nd ed. (Regensburg: 1984), 196–239. See also Parsons, "Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries," 35–36.

89 Emerton, no. 46, 76; Tangl, no. 58, 107–08: "Et quia, si deberes in Baoiarię provinciam ius habere predicationis, sciscitasti, an non, quam a decessore nostro habuisti concessam: nos denique auxiliante Deo de ea, quae tibi largitus est decessor et predecessor noster,

In the changing political climate, with the antagonism between the Frankish mayors and Duke Odilo in abeyance and the success of Carloman and Pippin in maintaining political control of the Franks, the pope moved quickly to counteract his earlier support for Sergius.

However, the extension of Boniface's legateship brought him into repeated conflict with Virgil of Salzburg. The clashes between Virgil and Boniface illuminate some of Boniface's doctrinal concerns. They are also of interest because Virgil appears to have been responsible for the development of a Bavarian hagiographical tradition that sought to diminish the posthumous reputation of Boniface.

Virgil does not appear to have held any office upon his arrival, for Pope Zachary referred to him simply as a *religiosus vir*.[90] Nevertheless, he made an immediate impact. In mid-746, Pope Zachary reported to Boniface that he had received letters from Virgil and Sidonius, complaining about Boniface's stance in a controversy over baptism. They disagreed over a cleric who was baptizing people using flawed Latin. Pope Zachary agreed with Virgil that the shaky Latin skills of the priest did not invalidate the sacrament, and the tone of his letter reflected a degree of exasperation with Boniface's inflexibility:

> Virgilius and Sedonius, men leading the religious life in Bavaria, have informed us in their letters that you, reverend brother, have enjoined them to administer baptism a second time to certain Christians. This news has disturbed us not a little, and, if the facts are as reported, has greatly surprised us. They stated that there was in that province a priest who was entirely ignorant of Latin and who, in the baptismal service, not understanding the Latin idiom, made the mistake of saying 'Baptizo te in nomine patria et filia et spiritus sancti.' And on this account you, reverend brother, thought a new baptism to be necessary.[91]

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non minuimus, sed augemus. Et non solum Baoiariam, sed etiam omnem Galliarum provinciam, donec te divina iusserit superesse maiestas, nostra vice per predicationem tibi iniunctam, quae reppereris contra christianam relegionem vel canonum instituta, spiritaliter stude ad normam rectitudinis reformare."

90 Tangl, no. 68.

91 Emerton, no. 56, 100–01; Tangl, no. 68, 141: "Virgilius et Sedonius religiosi viri apud Baioariorum provinciam degentes suis nos litteris usi sunt, per quas intimaverunt, quod tua reverenda fraternitas eis iniungeret christianos denuo baptizare. Quod audientes nimis sumus conturbati et in admirationem quondam incidimus, si habetur, ut dictum est. Retulerunt quippe, quod fuerit in eadem provincia sacerdos, qui Latinam linguam penitus ignorabat et, dum baptizaret, nesciens Latini eloquii infringens linguam diceret: 'Baptizo te in nomine patria et filia et spiritus sancti.' Ac per hoc tua reverenda fraternitas consideravit rebaptizare."

Virgil had won the first round, and soon after, in 747/8, Virgil became abbot of St Peter's, the monastery attached to the see of Salzburg. Now it was Boniface's turn to write to Pope Zachary, stating that Virgil was creating trouble between Boniface and Duke Odilo, and furthermore, that Virgil claimed the pope had promised him one of the four sees consecrated in 739.[92] If that were not sufficiently damning, Boniface also accused Virgil of heresy, which resulted in a summons to Rome for the abbot. Zachary wrote:

> As to the foolish and sinful doctrine which he now teaches: if it should be made clear that he believes there is below this earth another world and other men, and also a sun and a moon, then summon a council, depose him from the office of priest, and cast him out of the Church. We have also, however, written to the duke and have sent a summons to Virgilius to present himself before us for a thorough investigation so that, if he be proved to be in error, he may be condemned according to canonical rule.[93]

The outcome of his meeting with the pope is not recorded, if it ever took place; however, Virgil became the bishop of Salzburg in June 749.[94] We do not know what exactly Virgil espoused, as the only account appears in this letter. Speculation has ranged from a geographical explanation that the antipodes must be inhabited, to a syncretism of Irish folklore with Christian beliefs, in which a subterranean or overseas otherworld held the souls of the dead.[95] Whatever the truth behind this particular controversy, it points to a gulf between the ecclesiastical cultures of the two men. There were different understandings of church practice in the Irish and Roman traditions, as reflected in the variance

92 Only the papal letter of reply exists (Tangl, no. 80).

93 Emerton, no. 64, 125 Tangl, no. 80, 178–79: "De perversa autem et iniqua doctrina, quae contra Deum et animam suam locutus est, si clarificatum fuerit ita eum confiteri, quod alius mundus et alii homines sub terra sint seu sol et luna, hac habito concilio ab ęcclesia pelle sacerdotii honore privatum. Adtamen et nos scribentes predicto duci evocatorias prenominato Virgilio mittimus litteras, ut nobis presentatus et subtili indagatione requisitus, si erroneus fuerit inventus, canonicis sanctionibus condempnetur."

94 Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, 262.

95 Marina Smyth, "Das Universum in der Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister," in *Virgil von Salzburg: Missionar und Gelehrter*, eds. Heinz Dopsch and Roswitha Juffinger (Salzburg: 1985), 177–78; John Carey, "Ireland and the Antipodes: The Heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg," *Speculum* 64, no. 1 (1989), 1–10.

in their liturgies, the status of bishops, and monastic customs.[96] This conflict of ecclesiastical cultures may have formed part of Boniface's objections to Vivilo's tenure in the see of Passau in 739, as well as his conflicts with Sidonius, a successor to the see of Passau, in 746. There is some evidence for a community of Irish monks at Passau, similar to that at Salzburg.[97]

Sven Meeder has argued that Boniface used Continental ideas about "Irish peculiarities" to "illustrate to the ecclesiastical hierarchy (in particular the pope) the persistence of opposition to [his] important work."[98] Boniface went on to have disputes outside of Bavaria with two other Irish priests, Sampson and Clemens, who contradicted Roman practice,[99] around the same time as his clashes with Virgil and with the Frank Aldebert were taking place.[100] These conflicts formed the last records of Boniface's interaction with the Bavarian church. He was soon to lose his patron, Carloman, who retired to the monastic life after the Franks destroyed the Alemannic ducal house at Cannstatt in 746. Under Pippin, the sole mayor of the palace, Boniface shifted his attention to Mainz and its mission field, Frisia.

The end of the decade saw changes across the Frankish world and its peripheral duchies. Pippin released his half-brother Grifo from his imprisonment, and when Duke Odilo died in 748, Grifo raised a following in Bavaria. Both Lantfrid of Alemannia and Suidger, the donor of land at Eichstätt, supported Grifo against Pippin.[101] Odilo's son Tassilo was only seven or eight years old; in comparison, Grifo appeared a more suitable successor. Support for Grifo forced Hiltrud, Odilo's widow, and her son into an alliance with her brother, Pippin, who intervened in Tassilo's favour. Grifo escaped and was killed in 753, trying to make his way from Aquitaine to Lombardy.[102]

With the accession of Tassilo to the ducal seat, Bavaria entered a new, post-Bonifatian era. Virgil of Salzburg would play a role in supporting the expansion of Tassilo's prestige, and in creating a sacred history for Bavaria that downplayed the role of Boniface. Three of Boniface's episcopal appointees died in a

96 On differences between Irish and Roman practices, see Ó Néill, "Bonifaz und Virgil," 76–83; Sven Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy of Clemens," *Church History* 80, no. 2 (2011), 268–79; and Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600–1200* (Cambridge: 2014).

97 Evidence for Irish manuscript models at Passau were found by Franz Brunhölzl in *Studien zum geistigen Leben in Passau im achten und neunten Jahrhundert* (Munich: 2000), 23–24. Hammer, "For All the Saints," 20–21, considers the possible Irish connections for Vivilo.

98 Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy," 252, 279.

99 Meeder, "Boniface and the Irish Heresy," 251–80.

100 See Tangl, no. 59 and no. 80; *Concilium Romanum*, MGH Conc. II.1, 39.

101 Ann. Mett., MGH SRG 10, ed. B. Simson (Hanover: 1905), 40–42 (Lantfrid); *Annales regni Francorum*, MGH SRG 6, a. 747–8, 7–8 (Lantfrid and Suidger).

102 Ann. Mett., MGH SRG 10, 42–43; *Annales regni Francorum*, MGH SRG 6, a. 753, 10–11.

short period of time, and two of their replacements had been opponents of his: Virgil of Salzburg succeeded Johannes as bishop in 749, while his colleague Sidonius became bishop of Passau in 753/4.

In 754, the year of Boniface's martyrdom, Pippin was anointed by Pope Stephen, and the following year, Tassilo came for the first time to the yearly assembly of the Franks.[103] However, despite his political dependence on Pippin, there were signs of a Bavarian desire for autonomy. In 756/7, although still under the age of majority, Tassilo oversaw a church synod in Bavaria, at Aschheim.[104] There he was called *princeps*, asserting for him parity in status with the Frankish king.[105] By 763, when Tassilo was approximately twenty-two years old, he began to establish his independence from his uncle Pippin.[106] The *Annales Regni Francorum* alleged that the Bavarians deserted the Frankish army that year, as they mustered against Aquitaine.[107] From 763 to 788, Tassilo continued the independent policies of his ducal predecessors. He re-established Bavarian papal connections, supported proprietary cloisters, sought to acquire new territories in the southeast, and forged closer bonds with the Lombard monarchy by marrying Liutpurga, one of the daughters of the Lombard king Desiderius. The duke continued to support and establish monasteries as his father had done, building new foundations in border regions and supporting the foundations of noble families.[108]

There was a second phase of renewal in the bishoprics of the Bavarian duchy around this time. Once again, in a span of two years, all but one of the bishops died. In Regensburg, Bishop Sindpert succeeded Gauzbald, who died in 762/763. Bishop Sidonius of Passau is presumed to have died in 763/764, and was replaced by Bishop Anthelmus.[109] The death of Joseph of Freising in January 764 allowed Tassilo to place Arbeo, from a family of the highest

103 *Annales Regni Francorum*, MGH SRG 6, a. 755, 12. Tassilo also took part in two Frankish wars, when Pippin besieged the Lombard king, Aistulf, in 753 and 755.

104 *Concilium Ascheimense*, MGH Conc. 2.1, 56–58.

105 *Concilium Ascheimense*, MGH Conc. 2.1, 56; Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich,* 168.

106 Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich,* 344. In 765 Tassilo requested pope to mediate between them: MGH Epp 3, no. 36, 545–46.

107 *Annales regni francorum,* MGH SRG 6, a. 763, and Ann. Mett. MGH SRG 10, 52. Jonathan Couser, "Inventing Paganism in Eighth-century Bavaria," *EME* 18, no. 1 (2010), 40–41 suggests that Tassilo may have left to deal with an uprising of the Carinthian Slavs in that year.

108 Max Fastlinger, *Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der bayerischen Klöster in der Zeit der Agilolfinger* (Freiburg: 1902), 150.

109 This date is based on his listing in the Salzburg Confraternity Book, between Gauzbald of Regensburg and Joseph of Freising Anthelmus is listed in the *Ordo conprovincialium pontificum,* MGH SS 13, 352, and in the Salzburg Confraternity Book. *Liber confraternitatum*, MGH Necr. 2, 26.

nobility, in the episcopal seat.[110] Salzburg alone underwent no change in episcopal leadership, as Virgil was still there. Virgil worked closely with Tassilo, who donated to the Salzburg cathedral and the building of a church of wondrous magnitude ("ecclesia mire magnitudinis"). Together they emphasized an independent Bavarian ecclesiastical tradition that owed little to Boniface.

7 The Bavarian Hagiographical Tradition

Boniface's accomplishments in Bavaria were not questioned in the *Vita Bonifatii* (ca. 763–768), which heightened the significance of Boniface's achievements and enlisted the saint in the struggle for authority and influence for Mainz. Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebaldi* and *Vita Willibaldi* followed not long after, further promoting his legacy.[111] These three *vitae* exhibit a pro-Carolingian bias, labelling opponents of the Carolingians as pagans.[112] In his description of Bavaria, Willibald simplified the variety in episcopal traditions that existed there. According to his account, there were no true bishops before Boniface, and then there were four. Stephan Freund has questioned whether the establishment of episcopal sees can be credited to Boniface, noting that he received mention in the *Liber Pontificalis* only for his preaching activity in "Germania," during the papacy of Gregory II.[113] The only evidence in support of the claim is Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and the letter from Gregory III to Boniface, congratulating his self-reported creation of the four dioceses. It is more plausible that Boniface put the finishing touches to reforms that had been in preparation from the days of Theodo.[114]

110 Arbeo appears in TF 23 as bishop of the Freising church and at the same time rector of the Marienkloster there.

111 Ian Wood dated the composition of the *Vita Wynnebaldi* to post 763–68, and the *Vita Willibaldi* to pre-786, in *The Missionary Life*, 52 and 64.

112 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 62. Carolingian literary productions frequently depicted the peripheral duchies as not Christian. The *Breves Notitiae* described the Bavarian duke Theodo and his family as pagans, as did the *Vita Bonifatii* for the Thuringian duke, Heden. *BN* c. 3.8; Willibald, *VB*, c. 6. See also Couser, "Inventing Paganism," 26–42, on references to paganism in Bavarian literary productions.

113 Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern,* 53. *Liber Pontificalis* 1, 397: "Hic in Germania per Bonifatium episcopum verbum salutis praedicavit et gentem illam sedentem in tenebris doctrinae lucis convertit ad Christum, et maximam partem gentis eiusdem sancti baptismatis lavit unda" ("In Germania Bishop Boniface preached the word of salvation and returned those people remaining in the dark to the light of the doctrine of Christ, and washed the greater part of those people with the water of Holy Baptism").

114 Freund, *Von den Agilolfingern,* 58; also 73–74.

Bavarian sources showed little overt interest in the reformer. He was mentioned in passing, in a 9th-century Freising document that referred to the time "when Boniface came to manage church matters."[115] Willibald of Eichstätt, but not Boniface, was included in the Salzburg *Liber Vitae*.[116] The only other mentions of Boniface in Bavarian sources are a notice of his martyrdom in the Annals of Salzburg (*Annales Iuvavenses Maximi*), and the prayer confraternity books (*Libri Vitae*) of Ilmmünster and St Stephan in Passau, which date from the 8th and 9th centuries, respectively.[117]

Virgil of Salzburg urged Arbeo of Freising to write the lives of Saints Emmeram and Corbinian in reaction to the *vitae* that emerged from Mainz and Heidenheim in the wake of Boniface's death. In particular, Arbeo's hagiographies concentrated on the Frankish missionaries whom Duke Theodo had encouraged to organize and extend the Christian church. In Salzburg, the ducal family worked closely with Rupert, the Bishop of Worms, from approximately 696 to 712.[118] The *Vita Haimhrammi* recounted that Emmeram came from Poitiers to Regensburg at the invitation of Theodo, and a third reformer, Corbinian, came to Bavaria from the court of Pippin at the end of Theodo's reign between 714–716.[119]

Theodo's son Grimoald had given Corbinian land near the grave of Saint Valentinus at Meran, where he constructed a church.[120] Now in the 8th century, Duke Tassilo negotiated the translation of the bones of St Valentinus from Lombardy to Passau, increasing the sacral importance of this episcopal centre.[121] Working with Virgil, Tassilo set about creating an independent sacred history for Bavaria, drawing on its pre-Bonifatian Christian tradition.[122] Bishop Arbeo was involved in the translation of Valentinus, and in 769 the

115 TF 234a: "…quodo venit Bonifacius episcopus regere res ecclesiasticas."

116 *Liber confraternitatum*, MGH Necr. 2, 26.

117 *Annales Iuvavenses Maximi*, MGH SS 30.2, 732–33; *Liber Vitae* of Ilmmünster, MGH Necr. 3, 104; *Liber Vitae* from St Stephan in Passau, MGH Necr. 4.1, 182.

118 Noted in the *Conversio*, c. 1, 9 and *Gesta Hrodberti confessoris,* MGH SRM 6, 157–62. Rupert's arrival is dated from the second year of the reign of Merovingian king Childebert III (694–711); see Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich,* 230. His departure from Worms may have been linked to his opposition to the ascendancy of the Pippinids; see Herwig Wolfram, "Der heilige Rupert und die antikarolingische Adelsopposition," *MIÖG* 80 (1972): 7–34.

119 Arbeo, *Vita et passio sancti Haimhrammi martyris*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff (Munich: 1953), c. 5, and Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani*, c. 5.

120 Arbeo, *VC*, c. 26. The church at Meran was mentioned in Arbeo, *VC*, c. 23.

121 Jahn, *DB*, 400.

122 For the early history of Christianity in the region, see Gottfried Mayr, "Frühes Christentum in Baiern," in *Die Bajuwaren: Von Severin bis Tassilo 488–788*, eds. Hermann Dannheimer and Heinz Dopsch (Munich: 1988), 281–96.

relics of St Corbinian were brought to his own see of Freising. It must have been on the occasion of the translation of Corbinian that Virgil urged him to write the lives of Saints Corbinian and Emmeram.[123] The *vita* of Corbinian was written sometime between 769 and 772, when the *Vita Haimhrammi* was written.[124] Arbeo's hagiographical accounts challenged the depiction in the *Vita Bonifatii* of Boniface's influence in Bavaria by demonstrating the presence of earlier reformers.

Ian Wood has argued that Virgil had already commissioned a life of St Rupert circa 744, to emphasize the existence of a tradition in Salzburg before Boniface's arrival.[125] In it, the convent of Nonnberg was depicted as being established by Rupert according to *canonicus ordo*, which diminished the work of Boniface by portraying the Bavarian church as already reformed.[126] Virgil also had the body of Rupert translated to the new Salzburg cathedral, built sometime between 767 and 774.[127] A second account of the deeds of Rupert, the *Gesta Hrodperti*, was written around 791–793, based on the earlier version. Thus, in a very short period, three of the episcopal sees of Bavaria had their histories written, undermining the claims that Boniface had founded the Bavarian church. Passau was the only bishopric which did not necessitate this treatment, as the incumbent had been appointed by the pope.[128]

In the *vitae*, all three "founders" of the Bavarian church were designated as bishops. Emmeram and Rupert were said to have been bishops before they arrived in Bavaria, Emmeram in Poitiers and Rupert in Worms. There is no evidence that Regensburg, Salzburg, or Freising were considered episcopal *sedes* prior to 739; the emphasis on their role as bishops can be understood as a response to the claims in the *Vita Bonifatii*.

The glorification of Bavaria's ecclesiastical past was only one element of the extolment of Tassilo's ducal power. Pope Hadrian I baptized and anointed Tassilo's son Theodo in Rome in 772, an unusual recognition for a non-royal heir. This was also the year of a Bavarian victory against the Carinthians, which was compared in Salzburg and Regensburg with Charlemagne's destruction of the Saxon *Irminsul*.[129] Tassilo was thereby set on par with Charlemagne as

123 Wolfram, *Grenzen und Räume*, 72.

124 Wolfram, *Grenzen und Räume*, 72; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 156–57.

125 Virgil, who died in 785, may have commissioned the *Gesta Hrodberti*, as well. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 148.

126 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 150.

127 Jahn, *DB*, 142.

128 Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 157–58.

129 *Annales Iuvavenses maximi* and *Annales s. Emmerami maiores*, ed. Harry Bresslau, MGH SS 30.2 (Hanover: 1934), 732–741, both under entries for the year 772.

military victor and champion of the Christian faith. By 774, however, the duke's fortunes had begun to turn. Charlemagne took over the Lombard kingdom, and the two cousins were brought increasingly in conflict. In June of 788, Charlemagne called an assembly at Ingelheim at which Tassilo was tried and found guilty of disloyalty.[130] After Tassilo's deposition, Charlemagne spent two years in Regensburg, from 791–793, the longest time he remained outside the Frankish kingdom. Bavaria was placed under the rule of prefect Gerold, along with Bishop Arn of Salzburg.

8 The Bonifatian Legacy

While the memory of Boniface in Bavaria faded within decades, his ideas would have a long afterlife. It could be argued that Boniface had little effect in Bavaria, due to the strong resistance of its dukes to the encroachment of growing Carolingian power. His role in establishing a canonically structured Bavarian church was probably less than claimed in the *Vita Bonifatii*, and the generation following had effectively erased his significance in the region by writing an independent ecclesiastical history. However, the triumph of Charlemagne over the Bavarian duchy was followed by reforms which stemmed from Boniface's efforts, specifically the Frankish form of Christendom he had developed through church councils. The after-effects of his message and his work were pivotal in creating post-Agilolfing Bavaria.

The ideas from church councils held in Francia under the direction of Boniface were deployed in the re-organization of Bavaria, altering its ecclesiastical and social structures. In the following generation, Carolingian kings and bishops brought churches and monasteries founded by laymen under their control. The evidence from the Freising and Salzburg sources indicate an emphasis on canonical rights that was largely a Carolingian phenomenon. By insisting that only the head of each diocese could dedicate a church, bishops began to integrate noble proprietary churches into their jurisdiction.[131] Charlemagne continued to increase episcopal jurisdiction, issuing the Capitulary of Herstal in 779, which ensured episcopal power over the clerics in their parishes, and affirmed the episcopal right to the "tenth," a donation of one-tenth

130 Stuart Airlie, "Narratives of triumph and rituals of submission: Charlemagne's mastering of Bavaria," *TRHS*, 6th series 9 (1999), 93–120.

131 Warren Brown, *Unjust Seizure: Conflict, Interest, and Authority in an Early Medieval Society* (Ithaca: 2001), 84–86.

of all income.[132] His capitulary *Admonitio Generalis* (789) emphasized the episcopal government of monks and clerics and the organization of bishops under metropolitans.[133]

This hierarchy was reinforced in Bavaria with the creation of an archbishopric at Salzburg. Arn succeeded Virgil as bishop of Salzburg in 785, and in 798, Pope Leo III bestowed upon Arn the *pallium,* elevating him to archbishop. After Charlemagne, it was Arn who had the most influence on the new landscape of Bavaria in this period of transition. He came from a high-ranking family in Bavaria, but he had also served as abbot of Saint-Amand, in the Frankish kingdom.[134] As bishop and archbishop, Arn oversaw a series of synods in Bavaria between 794 and 810, which planned the re-organization of the Bavarian church along the lines of the Frankish and Roman models.[135]

He was also responsible for preparing bishops for their part in the expansion to the east. The archepiscopal see of Salzburg became a centre of missionary efforts. The *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* (ca. 870) reported that Arn was ordered by Charlemagne to preach to the Slavs in 798. It describes Arn and prefect Gerold traveling together to Carinthia in 798 to install a newly dedicated *chorepiscopus.*[136] After the Franks, together with the Bavarians, finally destroyed the Avar *hring* in 795, Arn supplied the ecclesiastical needs of areas such as Carinthia and Pannonia that were being fortified by Slavic princes (*duces*) and Frankish counts in the former Avar region.[137]

The restructuring of the Avar lands into an East Frankish march was accomplished by the administration and conversion of the region in a manner that brought it closer to Frankish organizational practices. This restructuring was only possible, however, due to a reconception of the region as a field of missionary activity. The imposition of Frankish authority was thereby presented as a protective measure, bringing local inhabitants the benefits of Christian education and Frankish governance. As Timothy Reuter noted, one of the long-term influences of Boniface was his provision of the model and rhetoric of religious

132 *Capitulare Haristallense* (a.779), MGH Cap. I, c. 4, 46–51.

133 *Admonitio generalis*, MGH Cap. I, 53–61. Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History 2 (London: 1977), 3–4.

134 Wilhelm Störmer, "Die junge Arn in Freising: Familienkreis und Weggenossen aus dem Freisinger Domstift," in *Erzbischof Arn von Salzburg*, eds. Meta Niederkorn-Bruck and Anton Scharer (Vienna: 2004), 9–26.

135 Especially *Concilium Rispacense* (a. 798?) and *Concilia Rispacense, Frisingense, Salisburgense* (a. 800), *MGH Conc.* 2.1, 196–201 and 205–19.

136 *Conversio,* c. 8, 116.

137 *Conversio*, c. 7, 112.

mission for this effort.[138] Under the influence of Boniface a Carolingian ideology of royal power was attached to the theme of conflict with paganism.[139] The conversion of the Avars was presented as the purpose of a war against the Avars, thus legitimizing the establishment of Carolingian power in the region. As the Frankish kings and bishops forged closer ties with the papacy in Rome, the Franks began to portray themselves as the guardians of the Church and the Christian faith, fusing religious and political goals. For Charlemagne, a mission program supported the rhetoric of the emperor as the protector of Christendom; for the bishops, it offered a way to build up the authority of a diocese.[140]

Taking the long view, it can be said that Boniface was "one of the architects of the Carolingian empire."[141] He provided an ideological construct of the struggle with paganism;[142] he made Rome central to the Frankish court's self-conception; and he understood that organized institutions needed to follow preaching and conversion. Bavaria now looked north, realigning the connections of its religious institutions to Mainz and to the Frankish heartlands; it also looked east, towards the mission lands. Despite the many challenges he faced in the region, Boniface ultimately shaped it through his influence on the Carolingians.

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138 Timothy Reuter, "Saint Boniface and Europe," in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St. Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 69–94.

139 Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC: 2011), 203.

140 Rosamond McKitterick, "The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals," *English Historical Review* 115 (2000), 1–20.

141 Stuart Airlie, "The Frankish Aristocracy as Supporters and Opponents of Boniface," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 255–70, on 269.

142 Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons,* 144.

CHAPTER 14

Boniface in Frisia

Marco Mostert

1 Introduction

Let us start at the end. The medieval history of the northern Netherlands is punctuated by a murder. The Anglo-Saxon papal legate Wynfrith, better known as Boniface, almost eighty years old at the time, had been in Frisia for several months to preach the Word of God to the pagans. In 753 he had left his monastic retreat in Fulda, where he had retired after a long career in Germany, and arrived in the northern Netherlands accompanied by no fewer than fifty-two followers. He had passed the winter in the Utrecht mission post, which his compatriot Willibrord had founded a generation earlier in an old Roman fortress on the Rhine. Boniface had been there before: after a very short visit in 716 he had returned in 719 to learn from Willibrord in the following two years. Willibrord, who had been appointed archbishop of the Frisians, had mainly worked in the coastal area of the later county of Holland; Boniface had worked further north, on the island of Wieringen and in Westergo, in what is now Friesland. In the spring of 754, when the weather permitted travelling once more, he travelled north again. Christianity had not taken root there despite the efforts of the missionaries. Together with a number of his followers Boniface was killed by pagan Frisians on 5 June 754. It was the end of a long life, and the beginning of a legend that until today has its fixed place in Dutch historical conscience.[1]

This chapter deals with the activities of Boniface in early medieval Frisia, particularly with his first two visits, in 716 and in 719–721, and with the aftermath of his fateful third visit, in 753–754. To understand Boniface's involvements with the Frisians, it will be necessary to devote some attention to the Frisians and the area they inhabited. What did the pagan Frisians believe? What kind of society had they managed to form? And what were the chances that the mission and, later, the development of ecclesiastical structures, would be successful?

1 Marco Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, Verloren verleden 2 (Hilversum: 1999), 68–86.

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MAP 14.1 Frisia in the time of Boniface

2 Frisia before Boniface

The lands of the Frisians consisted of the coastal lands on the shores of the North Sea between the Scheldt in the south and the Weser in the north. How far inland Frisian influence reached is hard to tell, as there were no clearly defined borders with their neighbours, and because the Frisians did not form a clearly demarcated political unity.[2] It is clear, however, that they were active from time to time in the area of the Kromme Rijn, the branch of the Rhine that starts at the site of Dorestad and meanders in a northwesterly direction to Utrecht. Utrecht was sometimes under their control, at other times under that of their southerly neighbours, the Franks.[3] The delta of the Rhine and Meuse in the centre of the Netherlands was politically a border area, whereas economically it was the hinterland of the Frisian economy. The centre of the Frisian lands was formed by the modern province of Friesland, though people who called themselves Frisians were also found in what are now the provinces of North and South Holland and Zeeland, or "Frisia on this side of the sea" (*Frisia citerior*). And they could also be found to the east of modern Friesland, in Groningen and Ostfriesland (now in Germany).

Within these Frisian lands, certain areas can be distinguished. The area between Vlie and Weser was characterised by *terpen*, artificial hills providing shelter from the sea to the undyked land. It was an area of open tidal marshes which were subject to tidal inundations. The area to the west, between Vlie and Scheldt, also formed an entity made up of smaller units. These districts (*pagi*) were wedged between the North Sea and the unreclaimed peat bogs on the landside. They were connected by sand dunes, and cut through by branches of the rivers Rhine, Meuse, and Schelde. The 10th-century editor of the second *Life* of Boniface, the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, described the Frisians as living in the coastal area "almost as fish in the waters … by which they are surrounded everywhere, so that they have only very few roads leading outside, unless they use boats for transportation." From his perspective in Utrecht, long after the establishment of the church there, the watery isolation of the Frisians

2 For the Frisians and Frisia in general, see: Herrius Halbertsma, *Frieslands oudheid: Het rijk van de Friese koningen, opkomst en ondergang* (Utrecht: 2000); Jurjen M. Bos, *Archeologie van Friesland* (Utrecht: 1995).

3 For the inhabitants of the centre of the present-day Netherlands, including Utrecht and Dorestad, see: Willem A. van Es et al., *Romeinen, Friezen en Franken in het hart van Nederland: Van Traiectum tot Dorestad 50 v. C.–900 n. C.* (Utrecht: 1994).

in Boniface's day seemed to signal to the writer that they were a people "without reason and barbarian," alien and Other.[4]

The inhabitants of this inhospitable coastal region are named "Frisians" already in the first and second centuries A.D.[5] Unfortunately, we do not have an early medieval history of the Frisians. Such a history might have been written: Charlemagne, a few generations after Boniface, saw the Frisians as a "people" whose law he had written down in the *Lex Frisionum*.[6] But one important precondition, literacy, was missing. There was no monastery or other ecclesiastical institution that might have written this history, and the Latin culture of the written word had not penetrated Frisia, apart from the Utrecht mission situated in the border area between Frisians and Franks. Only in the second half of the 10th century, when the monastery of Egmond was founded, would this change, but by then the political situation in Frisia was very different.

Although we do not have early medieval texts in which Frisians report about themselves, something like a Frisian identity must certainly have existed. Recently archaeological studies have identified Westergo, the area between the Middle Sea in the east and the Almere to the west, as the Frisian central area. From here Frisian kings may have thought to control the regional elites elsewhere.[7] Some of the names of the leaders in Frisian society have come down to us. Aldgisl and his successor Radbod were called "king" in Anglo-Saxon sources, and "duke" in Frankish sources.[8] Boniface was to be faced with Radbod. Were Aldgisl and Radbod "kings" who merely had power in "Frisia on this side of the sea"? And did Bubo, the Frisian commander who was to be

4 *VaB*, c. 9, 68: "Ac primum Fresonibus, quibus iam antea predicaverat, navigio revectus est, qui fere, quemadmodum et pisces, morantur in aquis, quibus ita undique concluduntur, ut raro ad exteras regiones accessum habeant, nisi navibus subvehantur. Hos remotos a ceteris nationibus ideoque brutos ac barbaros celestis seminiverbius adiit…"

5 All relevant mentions of "Frisians" can be found in *Excerpta Romana: De bronnen der Romeinsche geschiedenis van Nederland*, ed. Alexander Willem Byvanck. Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën 73 (The Hague: 1930) and Stéphane Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons du haut Moyen Âge*, vol. 2: *Corpus des sources écrites* (Lille: 1983).

6 On all aspects of the *Lex Frisionum*, see the excellent study by Harald Siems, *Studien zur Lex Frisionum*, Abhandlungen zur rechtswissenschaftlichen Grundlagenforschung 42 (Ebelsbach: 1980).

7 J.C. Besteman, J.M. Bos, and H. Anthonie Heidinga, *Graven naar Friese koningen: De opgravingen in Wijnaldum*, 2nd ed. (Franeker: 1993).

8 Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons du haut moyen âge*, vol. 2 (Lille: 1983), gives references to the Frisian kings/dukes. The Frisian leader Radbod, e.g., is called *dux* in the continuations of the Frankish Fredegar: *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV. cum Continuationibus*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 2 (Hanover: 1888), 172, but *rex* by Bede: Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and Roger Mynors (Oxford: 1969), lib. V, c. 10, 480.

defeated in 734 at the Boorne, also have merely regional authority?[9] It would be obvious to assume Frankish influence in creating power in the west of the Frisian lands. At the mouth of the Rhine, and at the Kromme Rijn, Frisians and Franks lived side by side and maintained a delicate balance of power, until the Franks drove out the Frisians once and for all. It was at Utrecht that the Anglo-Saxon mission among the Frisians started. The missionaries were supported by the Frankish rulers. No doubt control over the rich Frisian commerce influenced Frankish considerations that led to the extension of their sphere of influence northwards.[10]

The Frisians were traders. More than any other group on the coasts of the North Sea they were interested in the exchange of goods.[11] Even as late as the 11th century, an Old English poem calls a merchant's wife a "Frisian woman."[12] From the 6th century the Frisians used coins to facilitate the exchange of goods. Dorestad flourished from about the time when Boniface, in the evening of his life, returned to Frisia,[13] but already in the 7th century gold coins were struck at Dorestad.[14] Elsewhere in Frisia coinage was struck as well. In the coastal area, especially in the region of the *terpen*, large amounts of 6th- and 7th-century coins have been found. The 7th-century hoard of Wieuwerd, which was found in an earthenware pot, contained no fewer than 39 golden jewels.[15] Among them were coins from Byzantium and Merovingian Gaul that had been turned into jewels. The style of a *fibula* and some *bracteates* (little coin-shaped plates of metal struck on one side only) remind one of the Germanic cultures around the North Sea. It is clear that the Frisians faced by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries were by no means divorced from the world around them – no matter what people such as the editor of Boniface's second *vita*, who were merely concerned with the nature of their areas of settlement, may have

9 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici libri IV. cum Continuationibus*, ed. Krusch, 176.

10 See Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons*, vol. 1, for an excellent survey of Frisian commerce.

11 See Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons*, vol. 1.

12 Blanche Colton Williams, "The 'Frisian Sailor' passage," in *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon*, ed. Blanche Colton Williams (New York: 1914), 122; Leslie Whitbread, "The 'Frisian Sailor' passage in the Old English gnomic verses," *The Review of English Studies* 22 (1946), 215.

13 See Annemarieke Willemsen, *Dorestad: Een wereldstad in de Middeleeuwen* (Zutphen: 2009).

14 Struck by the moneyer Madelinus. Image in Willemsen, *Dorestad*, 117.

15 Image in Besteman et al., *Graven naar Friese koningen*, 22–23. A gazetteer of the main early medieval finds from the Netherlands, compiled by Mette Langbroek and Josje van Leeuwen, can be found in Annemarieke Willemsen, *Gouden Middeleeuwen: Nederland in de Merovingische wereld, 400–700 na Chr.* (Zutphen: 2014), 198–211.

thought. Frisia was an economically important region despite its relatively small size and sometimes difficult natural conditions.

3 What Boniface Found in Frisia

When Boniface disembarked in the Frisian lands in 716, he would have seen small settlements on natural elevations such as river banks, consisting of a few farms only. In the north, artificial elevations, the *terpen*, were being raised to provide room for houses or, through the merging of *terpen*, hamlets. Houses were made of wood or of wickerwork smeared with loam and had thatched roofs; cattle were stabled in boxes close to the living quarters of the farmers. The dead were taken care of in various ways. They were buried, sometimes in wooden coffins made out of tree trunks, or cremated, after which the remains were deposited in a hole in the ground, sometimes in an urn. There was fishing and hunting, but also agriculture and animal husbandry. Cows were important: in 780–784 Alcuin wrote a poem in which he called the bishop of Utrecht "rich in cows."[16]

Boniface would have noticed the social differences among the Frisians as manifested in their clothing, with jewellery and weapons also indicating the status of the wearers. Warriors had at least an axe and a short sword. Stirrups were reserved for higher-status warriors. There were also lances, long swords, and throwing axes (*franciscas*). Helmets were signs of proximity to the king; their wearers belonged to the summit of the warrior elite. Many of these sights will have been familiar to him, as houses and people looked roughly similar in Anglo-Saxon England.

Boniface probably would have been more or less able to understand the language spoken by the Frisians. The differences between Old Frisian and Old English were not insurmountable. Long after the Middle Ages, Dutch sailors could still understand the meaning of English place names and render them into Dutch.[17] Frisia was interesting to Anglo-Saxon missionaries because of the similarities in language and culture between the inhabitants of both southern shores of the North Sea. Bede, who wrote his ecclesiastical history of the English around 732, wrote that the person who first thought of the Continental

16 Alcuin, "Cartula, perge cito … ," v. 7, in Alcuin, *Carmina*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poetae Latini 1 (Berlin: 1881), 221.

17 Marco Mostert, "Linguistics of Contact in the Northern Seas," in *Empires of the Sea: The Power Structures of Maritime Networks*, eds. Rolf Strootman, Floris van den Eijnde, and Roy van Wijk (Leiden: 2019), 179–93.

mission, Egbert, "knew that there were many peoples in Germany, from whom the Angles and Saxons who now live in Britain descend."[18]

Similarities in language made things easier for Anglo-Saxon missionaries, and so did similarities in culture.[19] Although Latin literacy was extremely limited, the Frisians had their own system of writing runes. From the Dutch language area there survive some sixteen runic inscriptions, dating from the early 6th to the end of the 9th century, almost all from Frisian areas. A few of these inscriptions may be of English or Scandinavian origin, where the use of runes was continued much longer, and we have about a dozen indigenous runic inscriptions, in bone, stone, or in the wood of the yew tree, and struck in coins. It is hardly much, but many runes carved in wood must have been lost.

The Latin alphabet was used by the Franks also for letter-writing and administrative purposes. Although in pre-Christian Frisia hardly any Latin writing seems to have taken place, the Frisians were not unfamiliar with correspondence, as shown by an anecdote from the *Life* of Wilfrid where the Frisian King Aldgisl has a letter read aloud from the Frankish Duke Ebroin asking him to send or murder Wilfrid in exchange for money. Aldgisl then replies by tearing up the letter and destroying it in the fire in the presence of Ebroin's messengers.[20] By far the larger part of the population, however, was illiterate, except among the merchant class. Stories and songs were transmitted orally. There were blind singers, such as the blind Bernlef, mentioned in the *Life* of Liudger, one of the first indigenous clergymen trained by the Utrecht mission. Liudger met Bernlef in Groningen. He "was kind and could recite the deeds of the ancients and the battles of the kings well."[21] The stories were recited before a public in a way that is called *psallendo* (melodiously), and maybe with the accompaniment of a musical instrument. In Frisia lyres and harps have been found at more than a few sites.

Which religious ideas did Boniface encounter under the pagan Frisians? And what kinds of rituals took place? Diversity in burial rites implies that

18 Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and Roger Mynors (Oxford: 1969), lib. v, c. 9, 476: "Quarum in Germania plurimas nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli uel Saxones, qui nunc Brittaniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur."

19 Marco Mostert, "The Early History of Written Culture in the Northern Netherlands," in *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 20, eds. Slávica Ranković et al. (Turnhout: 2010), 459–68.

20 Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 4 (Hanover: 1902), c. 27, 220.

21 Altfrid, *Vita Lger*, lib. 1, c. 25, 30: "oblatus est ei caecus, vocabulo Bernlef, qui a vicinis suis valde diligebatur, eo quod esset affabilis, et antiquorum actus regumque certamina bene noverat psallendo promere."

there was no central institution or single custom that prescribed how to deal with the dead. Sacrifices were made directly to gods and the ancestors, and not mediated by clergy. Certain places of worship must have had a special significance, as is made clear from names, and since stones, trees, and sources are often mentioned in connection with non-Christian rituals, toponyms containing such elements as *holt*, *wold*, or *borne* may also refer to holy places. This is by no means certain, however.[22]

We do not have a single text of non-Christian origin from early medieval Frisia. Information may be gleaned, however, from the writings of the pagans' Christian adversaries. Because of the information monopoly of the Christian sources, scholarship has been inclined to see paganism as a single unity, as if the Germans from the days of Tacitus and the inhabitants of Iceland a millennium later were connected by a single tradition. Continuity, however, has to be demonstrated. Even if we limit ourselves to more or less contemporaneous descriptions of paganism in early medieval Frisia, there are immense problems of interpretation. The authors are far from impartial. They are decidedly against pagan practices, which they characterise as dirty and ungodly: the gods of the pagans are idols, false gods, phantasms. As soon as Christianity had gained some foothold, paganism was dismissed with a term of abuse as heresy. Another problem is that the authors package their information in terminology borrowed from classical mythology. In the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the missionary roots out all "fauns and satyrs," which, the author says, some of the pagans call gods of the woods: "Likewise he persuaded all Christians to disdain nymphs of the woods (*driades*) and of the vales (*napeas*) and other similar things that are monsters rather than divinities."[23] These names derive directly from Virgil, who was thoroughly studied in early medieval monastic schools.

Still, sometimes important information is contained in descriptions of the lives of the missionaries. Two Frisian sanctuaries are described by Alcuin in his 8th-century *Life* of Willibrord: one on Walcheren and the other on Fositesland, named after the god Fosite, "situated in the border area between Frisians and Danes."[24] It was here that the dangers of contact with "others" could be repelled by the power of the sacred. According to Alcuin's *Life*, Willibrord destroys a pagan sanctuary in Walcheren:

22 Rudi E. Künzel, Dirk P. Blok, and J.M. Verhoeff, *Lexicon van Nederlandse toponiemen tot 1200* (Amsterdam: 1988).

23 *VaB*, c. 8, 68: "Bonifacius, falcem manu tenens divinam, omnes faunos et sathyros, quos nonnulli paganorum silvestres deos appellant, funditus extirpavit. Similiter autem et driades napeasque et cetera huiusmodi magis portenta quam numina christianis omnibus nauci pendere persuasit."

24 Alcuin, *VW*, c. 10, 124.

> When the venerable man once, as was his wont, was on a missionary journey, he came to a certain place called Walcheren, where there still was a sanctuary of the old superstition. When the man of God smashed this in his fiery zeal before the eyes of the guardian, this one, flown into a terrible rage, in a fit of his insane spirit struck the priest of Christ on the head. Because God protected his servant, he did not suffer any injury from the blow. But when his companions saw this, they came running to punish the brute violence of the godless man by death.[25]

The Christians were in the majority and wanted to punish the solitary guard of the pagan sanctuary. What kind of sanctuary had been destroyed by Willibrord is not mentioned; the destruction of sanctuaries is a standard action of missionaries, mentioned generally at least once in their *Lives*, as, for example, when Boniface is described as felling the Donar Oak in Willibald's *Life*.[26] We learn more about the forms of paganism under the Frisians from the description of the second sanctuary.

On Fositesland, described also in the *Life* of Willibrord, the sanctuary of the non-Christians is deliberately desecrated by the missionary. The pagans' respect is wasted on Willibrord:

> When the man of God landed on this island through a storm, he stayed for a number of days … But because he was hardly impressed by the foolish religious customs of the place or by the cruelty of the king, who used to sentence desecrators of those holy things to the most horrible death, he baptized three men in the well, calling upon the holy Trinity. He also ordered some animals that were grazing there to be slaughtered as food for his company. When the pagans saw this, they thought that [the followers of Willibrord] would become mad or would die very soon. But when they noticed that nothing serious was happening, in deadly terror they told king Radbod what they had experienced.[27]

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25 Alcuin, *VW*, c. 14, 128: "Quodam igitur tempore, dum venerabilis vir iter euangelizandi more solito egisset, venit ad quandam villam Walichrum nomine, in qua antiqui erroris idolum remansit. Quod cum vir Dei zelo fervens confringeret praesente eiusdem idoli custode, qui nimio furore succensus, quasi dei sui iniuriam vindicaret, in impetu animi insanientis gladio caput sacerdotis Christi percussit; sed, Deo defendente servum suum, nullam ex ictu ferientis lesuram sustenuit. Socii vero illius hoc videntes, pessimam praesumptionem impii hominis morte vindicare concurrerunt."

26 Willibald, *VB*, c. 7.

27 Alcuin, *VW*, c. 10, 125: "Quo cum vir Dei tempestate iactatus est, mansit ibidem aliquot dies … Sed parvi pendens stultam loci illius relegionem vel ferocissimum regis animum,

A well, desecrated by using it for baptism; the slaughtering of animals, apparently dedicated to the god Fosite, to show his powerlessness in this way; the deceived expectation of the pagans that their god would not let this desecration pass without retribution: these are signs of the power of the Almighty the hagiographer wants to show. But in doing so the holy pagan sanctuary is at least described.

King Radbod was angry and decided to indicate in a ritual manner that Willibrord and his companions had to be put to death. This he did by casting lots, in order to know the will of the gods. According to Tacitus, who had described the public ritual for the first time, small slips were cut from the twigs of a nut-bearing tree, in which signs were carved. These slips were thrown on a white cloth, after which a priest or the head of a family (and in this case, King Radbod himself) drew three of them randomly. Afterwards the signs were interpreted:[28]

> Enraged, [king Radbod] thought to avenge the insults done to his gods on the priest of the living God, and during three days he threw lots, according to his custom, three at a time. And the lot of the doomed could never fall on the servant of God or on someone of his company, because God protects his own. One companion only was indicated by lot and has received the crown of martyrdom. Now the holy man was called before the king and strongly reprimanded, as he had violated his sanctuaries and insulted his god. The harbinger of Truth answered him unperturbed: "it is no god you worship, but the devil, who has deceived you by the gravest misapprehension, O king, to give up your soul to the immortal flames."[29]

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qui violatores sacrorum illius atrocissima morte damnare solebat, igitur tres homines in eo fonte cum invocatione sanctae Trinitatis baptizavit, sed et animalia in ea terra pascentia in cibaria suis mactare praecepit. Quod pagani intuentes, arbitrabantur, eos vel in furorem verti vel etiam veloci morte perire. Quos cum nihil mali cernebant pati, stupore perterriti, regi tamen Rabbodo quod videbant factum retulerunt."

28 Tacitus, *Germania*, c. 10, ed. and trans. Maurice Hutton and E.H. Warmington, in *Tacitus, Agricola. Germania. Dialogue on Oratory*, Loeb Classical Library 35, revised edition (Cambridge, MA: 1970), 144–47.

29 Alcuin, *VW*, c. 11, 125: "Qui [scil. Radbodus] nimio furore succensus, in sacerdotem Dei vivi suorum iniurias deorum ulcisci cogitabat et per tres dies semper tribus vicibus sortes suo more mittebat, et numquam damnatorum sors, Deo vero defendente suos, super servum Dei vel aliquem ex suis cadere potuit, nisi unus tantum ex sociis sorte monstratus et martyrio coronatus est. Vocabatur vero vir sanctus ad regem et multum ab eo increpatus, quare sua sacra violasset et iniuriam deo suo fecisset. Cui praeco veritatis constanti animo respondit: 'Non est Deus, quem colis, sed diabolus, qui te pessimo errore, o rex, deceptum habet, ut animam tuam aeternis tradat flammis.'"

Hereupon, Willibrord started preaching to explain the absence of power of the pagan gods and the power of God over the drawing of the lots. In this way the king was to convert. This did not happen immediately. However, Radbod let Willibrord depart for the Franks honourably and without hindrance.

This account suggests that the drawing of lots to decide over a person's life happened frequently and was not restricted to the case of Willibrord and his companions. Human sacrifice, with victims chosen from among the Frisians themselves, is in fact mentioned in another saint's life. The story comes from the *Life* of Wulfram, who had been archbishop of Sens. This Frankish aristocrat had come to Frisia to assist Willibrord in his missionary efforts:

> It happened one day that a boy of the Frisian tribe itself was to be sacrificed to the gods by means of strangulation. Therefore the holy bishop prayed the infidel duke [of the Frisians] to give him the life of this boy and not to kill a human being made in the image of God in the manner of a horrible sacrifice to demons. The name of that boy was Ovo. Now the duke answered in his mother tongue that once it had been decided in the eternal law by his predecessors and the whole people of the Frisians that, whomsoever fate had chosen, was to be sacrificed immediately on the solemn days they celebrated.[30]

Wulfram did, of course, succeed through his prayers to have Ovo's fetters broken, "and because of this a large crowd of Frisians has converted to the Lord." On another occasion two boys, Eurinus and Ingomarus, were saved by Wulfram from death by strangulation. The *Life* of Wulfram explains that human sacrifice by the Frisian king on high days was part of orally transmitted customs that were considered eternal. Apart from strangulation, the Frisians also knew human sacrifice by the sword, by hanging, and by drowning. The *Life* of Wulfram describes that it was their custom to cause some sacrificial victims

> …to be submerged in the waves of the sea or the waters, driven by devilish inspiration. Under this people there was a widow who had two extremely sweet sons. They were chosen by lot to be sacrificed to the

30 Ps.-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni episcopi Senonici*, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SRM 5 (Hanover: 1902), c. 6, 665: "contigit quadam die puerum quendam, ex ipsa Fresionum natione ortum, diis immolandum duc ad laqueum. Orabat autem pontifex sanctus incredulum ducem, ut huius pueri vitam sibi donaret nec hominem ad imaginem Dei factum sacrificium execrabile daemonibus immolaret. Vocabatur autem idem puer Ovo. Respondebat autem dux patrio sermone, decretum esse lege perhenni olim a praedecessoribus suis omnique Fresionum gente, ut, quemcumque sors elegisset, in eorum sollemniis diis offerendum sine mora."

> demons and to be killed in the whirlpools of the sea. They were taken to a certain place around which the sea flowed on two sides so that, when the flood of the sea would have covered that place, they would miserably be swallowed by the waves. One of them was six, the other one five years old … But the holy bishop Wulfram asked to spare their lives… To which the unbelieving duke said: "if your Christ liberates them from the danger of this moment, I will render them for ever into his dominion."[31]

Upon Wulfram's prayer the spit immediately became as high as a hill, and of course many converted after having witnessed this miracle.

Apart from Fosite, the Frisians also worshipped the better-known Donar, Wodan, and Saxnot, according to the so-called "Utrecht baptismal promise."[32] This is a text written in the Utrecht mission by an Anglo-Saxon author after an Anglo-Saxon exemplar, which survives in an 8th-century copy made in Mainz. It consists of a series of questions in the vernacular that had to be put to recently converted pagans before they could be baptized, together with the answers. The directions were put in Latin:

> Do you forsake the devil? And let him answer: I forsake the devil.
>
> And all devil's money [sacrifices]? And let him answer: and I forsake all devil's money.
>
> And all work of the devil? And let him answer: and I forsake all the devil's work and word and Donar and Wodan and Saxnot and all evil spirits that are their companions.
>
> And do you believe in God the almighty father? I believe in God the almighty father.
>
> Do you believe in Christ the son of God? I believe in Christ the son of God.
>
> Do you believe in the Holy Ghost? I believe in the Holy Ghost.[33]

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31 Ps.-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni*, c. 8, 667: "…alios marinorum sive aquarum fluctibus instinctu diabolico submergebat. Erat in praedicta gente mulier quaedam vidua, duos carissimos habens natos, qui ex sorte missa daemonibus fuerant immolandi et gurgite maris enecandi. Ducti namque sunt ad quendam locum bitalassi more aqua inclusum, ut, dum reuma maris eundem cooperiret locum, miserabiliter fluctibus obsorberentur. Erat vero, ut fertur, unus aetate septennis alterque quinquennis. …Sacer vero pontifex Vulframnus eos sibi vitaeque perdonari rogabat … Tunc dux incredulus: 'Si tuus,' inquit, 'Christus a periculo praesenti eos liberaverit, eius dominio eos perpetim concedo….'"

32 *Interrogationes et responsiones baptismales*, ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 222.

33 "Utrecht baptismal promise," in Maurits Gysseling (ed.), *Corpus van Middelnederlandse teksten* (*tot en met het jaar 1300*), Series II: *Literaire handschriften*, 1, *Fragmenten* (The

The same manuscript also contains another text, this time almost wholly in Latin, which very likely also stems from the Utrecht mission. It is the list of superstitious practices known as the *Indiculus superstitionum*. Unfortunately, this is nothing more than a list of (sometimes cryptic) headings. The few words in the vernacular indicate that the list must have originated in what are today the counties of North and South Holland around the middle of the 8th century. The use of words in the vernacular suggests that, at least in those cases in which the vernacular is used, we may be dealing with customs that were indeed observed:

> On blasphemy over the dead, i.e. *dadsisas*….
> On the sanctuaries in the woods they call *nimidas*….
> On the rubbing of fire from wood, i.e. *nodfyr*….
> On the pagan race with torn pieces of cloth or shoes which they call *yrias*.[34]

From this we may conclude that the mentioned *dadsisas*, "funeral chants," could be heard in Frisia. There were indeed sanctuaries in the woods, witness the evidence of place names, and apparently a rite in which fire was made, and a "pagan race." Whether the other practices mentioned in the list also occurred, cannot be said with certainty.

The Frisian religious practices we find described in a few saint's lives and texts from the Utrecht mission were presented by the missionaries as if they were over and done with. The realities were different. Utrecht was just an outpost in the struggle against pagan practices; it would take a long time before

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Hague: 1980), 22–26: "forsàchistu diobolae? / et respondeat: ec forsacho diabolae / end allum diobolgeldae? / respondeat: end ec forsacho allum diobolgeldae / end allum dioboles wercum? / respondeat: end ec forsacho allum dioboles wercum and wordum thunaer ende woden ende saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genotas sint. / gelobistu in got alamehtigan fadaer? / ec gelobo in got alamehtigan fadaer / gelobistu in crist godes suno? / ec gelobo in crist gotes suno / gelobistu in halogan gast? / ec gelobo in halogan gast." Cf. Marco Mostert, "Communicating the Faith: The Circle of Boniface, Germanic Vernaculars, and Frisian and Saxon Converts," *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 70 (2013), 87–130.

34 *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH Capit. 1 (Hanover: 1883), 222–23: "De sacrilegio super defunctos id est dadsisas / … / De sacris siluarum quae nimidas uocant / … / De igne fricato de ligno idest nodfyr / … / De pagano cursu quem yrias nominant scisis pannis uel calciamentis." For the view that the *Indiculus* was prepared in preparation for one of the reform councils, see especially Michael Glatthaar's contribution to this volume in Chapter 10, as well as the chapters by John-Henry Clay and Rob Meens.

Christianity really was to take root. Some churches were being built, but they could not prosper without an ecclesiastical infrastructure based on well-organised missions. Without such support, the wooden churches were an easy prey for dissidents. That is why Boniface set sail in 716 for Utrecht, where Willibrord was known to organise the mission as best he could, helped by the might of the Franks.

4 The Anglo-Saxon Mission in Frisia

Utrecht (Traiectum) was a small settlement of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants.[35] We know that sometime in the 7th century, under the Frankish king Dagobert I, around 630, or under Dagobert II, roughly two generations later, a small stone church had been built.[36] It was the first church in the later bishopric of the Frisians. The church had been left to decay, however, after Utrecht had been reconquered by the Frisians, and it is unlikely that Utrecht, which had been a small Roman fortress at the border of the Empire, still retained any military or administrative functions. If so, those roles were mainly symbolic: both the Frankish and Frisian rulers seem to have considered themselves as successors to the Romans. The *castellum* or fort Traiectum was about one hectare in size; the cathedral of Utrecht would later be built at this site. Once up to 500 Roman soldiers had been stationed there. To the west and east of the *castellum* had been military quarters, *vici*. Geographically, Utrecht belonged to the same area as Dorestad, situated some 20 kilometres upstream on the same branch of the Rhine. In Roman times, a *castellum* called Levefanum existed close to the site of Dorestad, where it served as part of the *limes*. Neither Traiectum nor Levefanum had been part of the *civitas* centred on Nijmegen. In the 8th century Dorestad was the economic and administrative centre. The region of the Kromme Rijn had been situated at the periphery of the Roman Empire; now it had developed into an important area, because connections between the North Sea and the Continental hinterland could be monitored here. The economic role of the region could even be compared to that of the far larger regions of the Meuse or the German Rhineland. The significance of Dorestad

35 More detail can be found in Marco Mostert, "News from Early Medieval Utrecht: Archaeological Finds Challenging the Historical Narrative," in *Transforming the Early Medieval World: Studies in Honour of Ian N. Wood*, eds. N. Kivilcim Yavuz and Richard Broome (Leeds: 2020; forthcoming).

36 Tangl, no. 109, 234–36. The arguments for Dagobert II in Wolfert S. van Egmond, "Utrechts oudste kerk en Dagobert: Vraagtekens bij een brief van Bonifatius," *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor Middeleeuwse Studies* 24 (2010), 95–112.

made it into a bone of contention between Franks and Frisians. There were no cities in Frisia – or no settlements that modern geographers would be willing to call cities. Together, Utrecht and Dorestad fulfilled most of the roles required of pre-modern cities.[37]

In the autumn of 690 Willibrord had come here with twelve companions to preach the gospel to the heathen Frisian king Radbod. The number twelve was highly symbolic, and may have been inspired by the fact that once Augustine of Canterbury had landed also with twelve companions to convert the heathen king of Kent and install the mission that was to develop into the seat of the first archbishopric in the British Isles. Hardly anything is known of these twelve companions. They are described as churchmen in the Irish tradition practising *peregrinatio*, an extreme form of asceticism.[38] Pilgrim monks did not merely leave their relatives to live in the artificial family of the monastery: they even left the monasteries behind to live far away, deprived of any ties with the society and culture of their early years. Frisia and the other territories north of the Rhine seemed very suitable for such a life, even if Willibrord and his companions remained together.

This is the traditional image of the life of the Utrecht mission, but it may owe more to hagiographical exigencies than to the realities of life on the Rhine. Recent archaeological research has brought to light much to alter the current image of Utrecht and its surroundings.[39] To the west of the former *castellum*, a number of settlements from the 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries have been investigated. Along the Rhine's lateral moraines could be found small hamlets, one of which has been fully excavated. This settlement consisted of six farmsteads. Each farmstead had a large house, which also had room for cattle, and very large storage buildings for bulk goods such as cereals. One farm knew industries such as metalworking, jewellery-making, and the importation and use of expensive pottery from as far away as the German Rhineland. Clearly there were links with Dorestad. That these hamlets were part of the same international trade network as their neighbours upstream is suggested by the working of amber, and by the finds of unused metal rivets that were meant to repair ships. A nearly complete ship dating to the time of Willibrord and Boniface has also

37 Cf. Rimbert, *VA*, c. 20.

38 A.H. van Berkum, "Réflexions sur la physionomie spirituelle de Saint Willibrord et de ses compagnons," *Études epternaciennes* 2 (1982), 7–18.

39 Especially interesting is M. Nokkert, A.C. Aarts, and H.L. Wynia, *Vroegmiddeleeuwse bewoning langs de A2: Een nederzetting uit de zevende en achtste eeuw in Leidsche Rijn*, Basisrapportage Archeologie 26 (Utrecht: 2010); and R.J.P. Kloosterman, R.D. Hoegen et al., *Domplein Revisited*, Basisrapportage Archeologie 64 (Utrecht: 2015).

been found at Utrecht.[40] At the fully excavated six-farmstead hamlet, a neighbouring site has been interpreted as belonging to a merchant. Here, coin finds witness trade across the North Sea, and a stylus suggests that some sort of writing may have been practised here before Christianity and its culture of the written word enabled lay literacy to develop.[39] Clearly, the farmers on the Rhine were relatively well to do. Re-excavation of the area where the settlement of the missionaries must have been, inside the former Roman *castellum*, has also rendered new information. The finds of late Merovingian fourteen pseudo-*tremisses* (in imitation of the golden coins which had been struck by the Frankish moneyer Madelinus ca. 635–650) and two silver *sceattas*, coins which had been overlooked in the excavations of 1936–1949, before the days of the metal detector, suggest that the *castellum* shared in the financial prosperity of the surroundings.[40] Clearly the "wilderness" in which the monks found themselves was not as uncomfortable as the hagiographers made it out to be. Considering the archaeological data that have been found in the areas where the Utrecht-based missionaries worked, the situation at Utrecht may not have been all that exceptional.[41]

The missionaries at the Utrecht of Willibrord's generation were monks in the sense that they each hoped to perfect themselves spiritually, sustained by communal life. To the Franks who had received them in 690 they seem to have been preachers rather than monks living according to a common rule.[42] As soon as Utrecht and Dorestad were once more under Frankish control – for the time being the Frisian king Radbod still ruled here – Pippin, the mayor of the palace (640/650–714) thought of the old *castellum* of Traiectum. Willibrord and his companions could restore the ruined church there, which would be useful to the Franks. In 696, after the battle of Dorestad, and after Willibrord had been to Rome and was appointed archbishop, the mission installed itself in

40 Martijn Manders and Robert Hoegen, *Waardestelling Vleuten 1: Het onderzoek naar de resten van een opgeboeide boomstamboot uit de 8e eeuw na Christus*, Rapportage Archeologische Monumentenzorg 198 (Amersfoort: 2011), to be found at http://cultureelerfgoed.nl/publicaties/waardestelling-vleuten-1.

41 Willemsen, *Gouden Middeleeuwen: Nederland in de Merovingische wereld*, 198–211.

42 On the relations between the Franks and the missionaries, see Arnold Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft unf Königstaufe: Kaiser, Könige und Päpste als geistliche Patrone in der abendländischen Missionsgeschichte. Taufe und Politik im frühen Mittelalter* (Berlin: 1984). Angenendt gives the known details about the way the missionaries dealt with (local, regional and supra-regional) power players in medieval Europe generally.

Utrecht.[43] The political situation remained unclear, however, because Radbod may have lost the battle, but the outcome of the war was hardly certain.[44]

In contrast to the coastal area, Traiectum had never been abandoned, even if the number of inhabitants in the 5th century had declined. Two 5th-century graves of boys have been found, and from the grave goods it is clear that they were members of regional aristocratic families. From the 6th century, the Frankish aristocracy started to penetrate the region of the Kromme Rijn from the east, from the Austrasian territories of the Franks. The regional aristocracy benefited from the discord between Frisians and Franks to enhance its own influence.[45] The church in the former *castellum* built by King Dagobert I or II, dedicated to St Thomas, had been given to the bishop of Cologne with the order of starting a mission under the Frisians.[46] A few years later the pagan Frisians captured Utrecht and Dorestad, and destroyed the church at Utrecht. In 678 the first contacts between the Anglo-Saxon church and the Frisians were established. In that year the Frisian king Aldgisl received bishop Wilfrid of York in his palace at Utrecht or Dorestad.[47] From that moment on Anglo-Saxon clergy never abandoned the idea that the Frisians had to be brought to Christianity. Wilfrid was merely passing through to deal with the affairs of the archbishopric of York. According to his *Life*, written ca. 720, during his visit suddenly more fish was caught than was normal. That was credited to his God, and many were said to have converted. The author had to admit that Wilfrid had not managed to convert all, which, of course, means Utrecht-Dorestad was still pagan, as the conversion of the aristocracy was a matter of all or nothing. Wilfrid had not succeeded.[48]

Around 690, new efforts were made by Willibrord and by Frankish missionaries such as Wulfram. It seemed as if the Frankish mission might achieve some success. Aldgisl had died and had been succeeded by Radbod, who let

43 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii*, c. 6, 172. Cf. Bede, *HE,* lib. V, c. 11, 486.

44 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii*, c. 6, 172 (on the battle at Dorestad); c. 7, 172–73 (on the marriage of Grimoald, the son of Pippin II, the victor of the battle, with the daughter of Radbod in 711); c. 8–9, 173–74 (the Franks of Ragenfred conclude a treaty with Radbod and invite him to attack Charles Martel with them). Unfortunately, we need to reconstruct the course of events on the basis of these few references. The author of the *Continuatio* is not always clear about which side Radbod chose.

45 H.L. de Groot, *Traces at Trajectum: An Archaeological Survey* (Utrecht: 1992), 10–13; H. Anthonie Heidinga and Gertrudis A.M. Offenberg, *Op zoek naar de vijfde eeuw: De Franken tussen Rijn en Maas* (Amsterdam: 1992), 99–102.

46 Tangl, no. 109, 234–36, written by Boniface to Pope Stephen II in 753, concerning the quarrel with Cologne about the bishopric of Utrecht (see below).

47 Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 219–20.

48 Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi*, c. 25–26, 219–20.

Wulfram preach, baptize, and miraculously save children from death by human sacrifice. Radbod himself was almost ready for baptism. Unfortunately, Wulfram made the mistake of giving an honest answer to a question the king asked him:

> The said prince Radbod, when he was to be submerged to receive baptism, hesitated and asked the holy bishop Wulfram, whom he forced through oaths in the name of the Lord [to tell truthfully] where the greatest number of Frisian kings, princes and noblemen could be found: in the heavenly realm that he hoped to see when he was to believe and be baptised, or in the realm that he [Wulfram] had called that of dark damnation? Then the blessed Wulfram said: 'make no mistake, illustrious prince. With God is a certain number of the elect. Because your predecessors as princes of the Frisian people have died without the sacrament of baptism, it is certain that they have received the doom of damnation. But he who believes from now on and will be baptised, will rejoice with Christ for all time.' When the unbelieving duke heard this – he had already approached the font – he withdrew, so it is told, his foot, saying that he did not want to forgo the company of his predecessors, the princes of the Frisians, by sitting with a few poor in that heavenly kingdom.... Unhappily he withdrew from the sacred font.[49]

The solidarity of the Frisian elites, evidently, was more important than eternal bliss in the company of those who did not belong to those elites. While the story may not reflect reality, what matters is that according to the *Life* of Wulfram there had been at least some time in which missionaries were left alone to preach.

When the Franks returned, Christianity may have been seen too much as the religion of the enemy. At the battle of Dorestad Radbod was beaten, and

49 Ps.-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni*, c. 9, 668: "Praefatus autem princeps Rathbodus, cum ad percipiendum baptisma inbueretur, percunctabatur a sancto episcopo Vulframno, iuramentis eum per nomen Domini astringens, ubi maior esset numerus regum et principum seu nobilium gentis Fresionum, in illa videlicet caelesti regione, quam, si crederet et baptizaretur, percepturum se promittebat, an in ea, quam dicebat tartaream dampnationem. Tunc beatus Vulframnus: 'Noli errare, inclite princeps, apud Deum certus est suorum numerus electorum. Nam praedecessores tui principes gentis Fresionum, qui sine baptismi sacramento recesserunt, certum est dampnationis suscepisse sententiam; qui vero abhinc crediderit et baptizatus fuerit, cum Christo gaudebit in aerternum.' Haec audiens dux incredulus – nam ad fontem processerat, – et, ut fertur, pedem a fonte retraxit, dicens, non se carere posse consortio praedecessorum suorum principum Fresionum et cum parvo pauperum numero residere in illo caelesti regno ... a sacro fonte infeliciter recessit."

Willibrord could return in 696; finally, he could settle into his mission. He built a second church at Utrecht, the St Saviour (which during the Middle Ages came to be known as the chapel of the Holy Cross). It did not take long, however, for the Frisians to rebel. In 714, when the Austrasian and Neustrian Franks were engaged in a mutual conflict, the Frisians once more chased the Franks from Utrecht.[50] Willibrord had to leave his mission and Pippin II and his wife gave him Susteren, safe behind enemy lines, to await better days. Maybe he went there; maybe he went to Echternach, the monastery that Irmina, the abbess of Oeren, had given him.[51] When Boniface arrived in Frisia, he did not find Willibrord there, but had to look for him in the south, in areas controlled by the Franks.

This happened in 716. Boniface was over forty years old, and was still known as Wynfrith, the name Boniface not being given to him until 719. According to his first biography, in 716 he wanted to travel to the Continent to "leave his fatherland and relatives," as Willibald puts it.[52] His abbot consented, and with a purse and two or three brethren, he embarked on a Frisian vessel in London. Wynfrith arrived safely in Dorestad, to decide what to do, as the situation which he found in Frisia was all but auspicious for a starting missionary. In Willibald's words:

> A fierce conflict that arose between the glorious prince and duke of the Franks Charles [Martel] and Radbod, the king of the Frisians, occasioned by a hostile raid of the heathen, caused severe unrest among the people on both sides, and through the dispersion of the priests and the persecution by Radbod the majority of the Christian churches, which earlier had been subject to Frankish rule, were destroyed or brought to ruin. Furthermore, the pagan sanctuaries were rebuilt and, worse still, idolatry was restored.[53]

50 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii*, c. 6, 172; cf. c.7, 172–73, c. 8–9, 173–74; Ps.-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni*, c. 4, 663–64.

51 J. Schroeder, "Willibrord: Erzbischof von Utrecht oder Abt von Echternach? Das Leben und Wirken des angelsächsischen Missionars aus der Sicht der frühmittelalterlichen Hagiographie," in *Willibrord, zijn leven en zijn werk*, Middeleeuwse studies 6, eds. Petronella Bange and Anton Gerard Weiler (Nijmegen: 1990), 348–57; A.H. van Berkum, "De constituering en mislukking van de Friese kerkprovincie," in *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, 166, gives a list of all charters relative to Willibrord in the years 697–727, including the donations to Echternach.

52 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 15: "deliberaret, ut patriam parentesque desereret."

53 Willibald, *VB*, c. 4, 16: "Sed quoniam, gravi ingruente paganorum impetu, hostilis exorta dissensio inter Carlum principem gloriosumque ducem Franchorum et Redbodum regem Fresonum populos ex utraque parte perturbabat maximaque iam pars ecclesiarum

Wynfrith went to Utrecht to talk with Radbod. The prospects for the mission were sombre, as he soon discovered. Disappointed, he travelled around and made plans for the future. In the end, when the weather worsened, he returned to England with a few companions, to stay the next years at Nursling.

In 719, Wynfrith, who had meanwhile become Boniface, received a papal mission to report on the possibilities of sending missionaries to the still pagan territories of Germany. In that year Radbod died, and Charles Martel had managed to bring the Frisian lands this side of the Almere definitively under Frankish authority.[54] Willibrord had returned to Utrecht, and started the restoration of the church of St Thomas, which he dedicated to St Martin, the patron saint of the Merovingians. He also rebuilt the mission for his companions.[55] He started a school for the formation of an indigenous clergy, and most probably also constructed other buildings necessary for the monastic communal life.[56] Willibrord, now archbishop of the Frisians, finally could start building the Frisian Church.

At that moment Boniface appeared, with his papal mission and with ideas that were not necessarily those of the older Willibrord.[57] Conflicts proved unavoidable. Willibald describes this episode in the life of Boniface as follows:

> When the holy servant of God saw that, although the harvest was large, the workers few in number, he became active as the assistant of

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Christi, quae Franchorum prius in Fresia subiectae erant imperio, Redbodi incumbente persecutione ac servorum Dei facta expulsione, vastata erat ac destructa, idulorum quoque cultura exstructis dilubrorum fanis lugubriter renovata."

54 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 23–24. For the other sources about this event, see F.L. Ganshof, "Het tijdperk van de Merowingen," in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 1, ed. D.P. Blok (Utrecht: 1949), 260.

55 The chronology of the oldest churches of Utrecht is a subject of heated debate. See, e.g., *De oudste kerken van Utrecht*, special issue of the *Bulletin van de Koninklijke Nederlandse Oudheidkundige Bond* 93 (1994), 133–96.

56 This is suggested by Bede, *HE*, v, c. 11, 486, who mentions Willibrord, after having settled in Utrecht, "plures per illas regiones ecclesias sed et monasteria nonnulla construxit." Surely he would have started building *monasteria* outside Utrecht only when he had already built a monastery for the Utrecht community.

57 Apart from Willibald's evidence, quoted in the next note, there is also the matter of Willibrord's and Boniface's different attitude towards books and the written word generally. Willibrord never seems to have written anything. The annotation in the Echternach calendar, MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10837, f. 39v, in its present form shows palaeographical problems; see Marco Mostert, "Wat schreef Willibrord?," *Madoc* 3 (1989), 1–6. The data about Boniface's unwavering trust in the authority of written texts have been put together by Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius* (Paderborn and Fulda: 1994).

> archbishop Willibrord, for three years with the aid of that bishop acquired with much effort a not negligible number of people for Christ the Lord, destroyed pagan sanctuaries, and built houses of God.[58]

Willibrord, who felt his age, asked Boniface to become his successor. Boniface refused this because, he said, he did not as yet have the age required to become bishop. Willibrord did not accept this, and a long altercation followed. As Willibald puts it, "in a long hither and thither of words arose a battle of minds between them and an estrangement that nevertheless did not disturb harmony."[59] That last claim must be wishful thinking. A second argument Boniface used was his papal mission, and that he should have papal permission to be consecrated bishop. In 721 Willibrord gave in and allowed Boniface to leave.

Boniface was to return to Frisia only in 753. Two years earlier Pippin had been elected as king of the Franks and anointed by the Frankish bishops. In the intervening years Boniface had been highly influential in Frankish ecclesiastical circles, but he was now some eighty years of age, and spent most of his time in his chosen retreat at Fulda. Once more the old missionary wanted to put his talents in the service of preaching the Gospel in Frisia, where he had earlier worked at Willibrord's side. When Willibrord died, in 739, control over the Frisian mission seems to have been passed on to Boniface through the influence of the Carolingian mayors of the palace. In 753, when the bishop of Cologne wanted to exercise his authority over Utrecht, the elderly Boniface left his monastic retreat at Fulda. Willibald does not mention this affair, the true motive for Boniface's journey to Utrecht. From a letter of Boniface to Pope Stephen II we learn enough to form an idea of the quarrel.[60] King Dagobert, Boniface writes, had given the church at Utrecht to the bishop of Cologne. But there was the provision that the Frisians were to be converted by Cologne. This Cologne had not done, and therefore its rights had been forfeited. That no Frisian mission had been possible as long as the Franks did not control Utrecht, he fails to mention. Willibrord was to have received Utrecht as his see. After his death an auxiliary bishop had taken care of Utrecht, and now Carloman had entrusted Boniface with the see. Probably Cologne was right, but Boniface

58 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 24: "Sed quia messe quidem multa operarios inesse paucos cerneret, sanctus hic Dei famulus cooperator etiam factus est per tres instanter annos Willibrordi archiepiscopi, multumque in Christo laborans, non parvum Domino populum, destructis delubrorum fanis et exstructis ęcclesiarum oratoriis, praefato pontifici opitulante, adquisivit."

59 Willibald, *VB*, c. 5, 25: "iamque per longas tricationum moras spiritalis inter eos orta est contentio et consona pulchrae discretionis facta dissensio."

60 Tangl, no. 109, 234–36.

tried to use his good relations with Rome in the struggle. He posited that Pope Sergius had founded a bishopric of the Frisians that directly depended on Rome, and the small mission became a cathedral complex. The pope was presented with a vision of history he could understand.[61]

However this may be, an aged Boniface returned to Frisia. Willibrord's mission had flourished with the help of Frankish power. In the school, Franks, Anglo-Saxons, Irishmen and, after a while, Frisians were trained.[62] There was a small library. Willibrord had once brought relics and books from Rome, and ever since the clergy had augmented the holdings. Texts were written here, such as the baptismal promise and the *Indiculus superstitionum*. Dorestad also developed. In the old Roman *castellum*, where the representative of the king had his seat, the Upper Church could be found; in the merchants' quarter the Lower Church.[63] In the 9th century there were many churches in the region of the Kromme Rijn, and we may assume that some of these were already extant when Boniface arrived in 753. Ecclesiastical organisation had also developed. According to Utrecht tradition, in the places where Boniface had expelled pagan vanities, he had built "monasteries and small churches, and also altars, suitable for sacrifice to God, and there he ordered the name of the living God to be invoked where previously dead idols had been venerated by the natives."[64] Willibrord will have done something similar, as it was part of his job to build churches, using the modest pieces of land given as gifts by the recently converted population. The churches, which for the time being remained in the hands of the founders, were simple structures of wood and loam. Archaeologists can hardly distinguish them from ordinary dwellings. But much more was not necessary: a room for the liturgy, with place at least for an altar, a priest, and the community of the faithful, sufficed. The priests officiating in these churches will, as elsewhere, have had the essential vestments, a book with the prayers of the Mass and a liturgical lectionary.[65]

61 Tangl, no. 109, 234–36, discussed by Marco Mostert, "Bonifatius als Geschiedvervalser," *Madoc* 9 (1995), 213–21.

62 Mostert, "The Early History," 462 ff.

63 Charter of Charlemagne, dated Nijmegen, 8 June 777, MGH DD Kar. 1, no. 117, 163–64. See also Willem A. van Es, "Friezen, Franken en Vikingen," in *Romeinen, Friezen en Franken* 96, 109–10.

64 *VaB*, c. 8, 68: "vir iste spiritu Dei plenus in locis, a quibus supradictas vanitates expulerat, ilico monasteria inclita et basilicas eximias, altaria quoque divinis sacrificiis apta construxit ibique invocari statuit nomen Dei vivi, ubi mortua ydola ab indigenis eatenus colebantur."

65 Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: 1989), 162.

The bishopric of the Frisians in 753 was quite different from that in 721. There were churches. There were believers who had given their property to Willibrord. There was a small intellectual and spiritual centre in the form of the Utrecht mission. And there was relative quiet, especially after Charles Martel had once again defeated the Frisians at the battle of the Boorne in 734.[66] Up to the Middle Sea the Frisian lands were now nominally under the control of the Franks.

After his arrival at the Utrecht mission, Boniface built a new church to replace the small church of St Saviour, which Willibrord had originally dedicated to Christ in emulation of Augustine of Canterbury's restoration of the ancient Roman church of St Saviour at Canterbury.[67] Despite his age, Boniface went to the periphery of the Frankish sphere of influence. In 754 he travelled from Utrecht, where he must have spent the winter, to the Boorne and the Middle Sea.[68] On 5 June he was killed near Dokkum.[69]

As soon as the news of Boniface's death reached England, a general council decided that the day of the martyrdom was to be solemnly commemorated. This necessitated the writing of a biography, and Willibald, an Anglo-Saxon from the circle of Boniface in Mainz, proved willing to take this task upon himself. Around 760 his *Life* of Boniface was finished. Willibald had had access to trustworthy witnesses of the frightful events that had taken place near Dokkum in Frisia, but Willibald had not been asked for an accurate account, but rather for a *vita* that was meant to serve the cult of the saint that Boniface had become.

How does Willibald describe the murder and its aftermath? Even before he left Mainz, Boniface knew that he would not return. He made sure that the ecclesiastical province he had organised would be managed well. Together with his companions he embarked and sailed the Rhine downstream to Frisia. After his arrival there he destroyed, wherever this was necessary, pagan sites and idols, built churches and baptised men, women and children in large numbers. Among his followers was Eoba, to whom he entrusted the care of the

66 *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii*, 176.

67 Charlotte J.C. Broer and Martin W.J. de Bruijn, *De eerste kerken in Utrecht: Sint-Thomas, Sint-Salvator en Sint-Maarten* (Utrecht: 1995), 43–47. Compare Bede, *HE*, lib. I, c. 33, 114 with Alcuin, *VW*, c. 13, 127.

68 His missionary activities are reflected in the donations by Frisians to Fulda, edited in *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland*, nos. 7–17, 12–28, dating from the end of the 8th century to 842.

69 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 48–56 provides the first story of the murder. *VaB*, c. 16, 73 mentions the book with which Boniface allegedly defended himself from the pagan Frisians. See also von Padberg and Stork, *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des Hl. Bonifatius*.

Frisian bishopric. He also had priests, deacons, and monks with him, some of whom are named by Willibald. These clergymen pitched their tents at the river Boorne, at the border of Westergo and Oostergo. The persons who had been baptized were led before Boniface, who laid his hands on them. Thereupon the newly baptized Christians went home; they were to return on the day of their first Communion.

Willibald describes how, on the day these new Christians were to receive Communion, Boniface and his followers were met by a "mob of pagans" (*paganorum tumultus*) armed with swords, spears, and shields and intent on violence and plunder.[70] When some of his young disciples tried to defend themselves and their companions, Boniface emerged from his tent carrying relics, and urged them with fatherly words to leave off fighting and accept the martyrdom that was God's will.[71] As he was speaking these holy words, the raging host set upon Boniface and his followers, slaying them mercilessly with swords and plundering the camp.[72] Thereupon they went to the ships, which contained the provisions of the clergymen and their armed escort. Among other things they found wine, which they drunk immediately. The division of the spoils posed some problems, with murderers hacking into one another and dying from greed. To their horror, the survivors did not find gold or silver in the chests which they had stolen, but only relics and books, which they threw away in their rage across the fields or into the swamps. Fortunately, they were later retrieved and sent to Boniface's monastery at Fulda.

The executioners came to a sticky end. When the news of the heinous bloodbath had spread across the land, "the Christians … brought together a formidable army, advanced, swift warriors of the coming revenge, to the border area [of Oostergo and Westergo], entered the lands of the unbelievers and … inflicted a destructive defeat on the pagans who opposed them from several directions."[73] The fugitives were pursued, their possessions taken, and the men, women, and children that had been captured were returned home.[74] The pagans that remained quickly converted to Christianity. The bodies of Boniface and his murdered companions were transported by a propitious wind over the Almere to Utrecht. They were buried there until archbishop Lull of

70 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 49.

71 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 50.

72 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 50.

73 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 52: "christiani … maximam congregantes expeditionem exercitus, confinium terminos prumpti postmodum futurae ultionis bellatores expetunt … ac paganos eis e diverso obbiantes ingenti strage prostraverunt."

74 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 52.

Mainz demanded the bodies so they could be taken to the monastery on the banks of the river Fulda. Thus Willibald.

5 Aftermath[75]

The gruesome events of 754 did not fail to impress contemporaries. In Utrecht, the memory of the martyr was celebrated. Some relics of Boniface, which ought to have been given to Fulda, were kept back, as well as some relics of his companions. There was even a heathen sacrifical axe that had fallen into the hands of the missionaries and had been given to the church of St Martin.[76] Most relics were kept in the chapter of St Saviour, the successor of the original mission post. Churches were dedicated to honour Boniface, also at Dokkum, as well as a chapel in Wynjeterp close-by. The development of the cult is understandable. The story of the murder had to develop at Utrecht, where, with ups and downs, the mission grew into a bishopric that remained conscious of its early date, and at Dokkum, where the murder had taken place. Stories were taken down in writing very early on by Willibald. Developments of those stories, which may or may not have been based on fact, were handed down among the Frisian Christians, and were written down at Utrecht after several generations. As soon as the second *Life* had been written down in the early 9th century and revised around 900 by bishop Radbod, the reading of both these earliest lives would inspire further developments of the story of the murder, in accordance with the wishes of the audience.

Such stories could be told about objects which were thought to have been in contact with the saint. In Dokkum, stone loaves of bread were kept. According to some they had come about when Boniface had asked a woman for bread, just before his death. She had refused and said there were only stones in the oven. The saint answered thereupon, that in that case the loaves would remain stones forever. Needless to say, different stories about the origin of the stone loaves came to be told as well.[77]

Nothing new was told about Boniface's Frisian connections in Fulda. There were contacts nevertheless: Fulda had acquired landed property in Frisia.

75 Most of the information used to write this section has been taken from Paulus Gijsbertus Johannes Post, "Dokkum," in *Bedevaartplaatsen in Nederland* 1, eds. Peter Jan Margry and Charles Caspers (Amsterdam and Hilversum: 1997), 290–304.

76 Utrecht, Museum Het Catharijneconvent, inv.nr. OKM m. 38.

77 Peter J.A. Nissen, "Het versteende brood: een volksverhaalmotief in een Oostnederlands leven van Bonifatius," *Archief voor de Geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland* 28.2 (1986), 173–91.

Around 800, Gebo, Gerwich, Geltrud, Isanbald and his wife Sigibern, Hunbert and Tetda, who all lived on Wieringen, in the region that had been Christianized by Boniface, gave their possessions to Fulda, and others followed suit. In all, more than eighty such donations are known, and the Fulda monks tried to keep records of their Frisian possessions until the 12th century.[78] But they never took note of the stories that must have been told of Boniface. Were they not interested?

To answer this question we need to consider what happened to the Frisian mission after Boniface's body left for Fulda in 754. At that moment the "bishopric" Utrecht seems to have been more or less abolished: Boniface's successor was no bishop, but abbot Gregory.[79] Utrecht must have been put under the authority of Cologne, together with the school which could form new generations of missionaries. Later, under the Carolingians, traditions about the foundation of the Utrecht bishopric developed. The mission came to be reconsidered in the light of later developments. Gaps in the list of bishops were filled, and Utrecht hagiographers constructed a genealogy which started with Willibrord, Boniface, and Gregory.[80]

Circumstances at Dokkum did not help to keep any stories about Boniface alive. Those stories that may have been told were not written down. If any attempts had been made to start a new mission here as a daughter of that at Utrecht, they had failed. There was no place where hagiographical texts may have been written down, and the area suffered from apostasy under bishop Frederick of Utrecht (820–835),[81] when for the last time the Frisians returned to the non-Christian religion of their forefathers. Apart from some additional details regarding the story of the murder, i.e. the supposed eye-witness account of an old woman recorded in the *Vita altera* that Boniface protected his head with a book and that he was decapitated, very little new information came to light.[82] The third *Life* of Boniface, written at Utrecht between 917 and 1075, does not really provide new details about the saint himself.[83] It seems as if the

78 Anton Carl Frederik Koch (ed.), *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland tot 1299*, 1 (The Hague: 1970), nos. 7–17, 12–28.

79 Liudger, *Vita sancti Gregorii abbatis Traiectensis*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger. MGH SS 15.1 (Stuttgart: 1887), 63–79.

80 References in Marco Mostert, "De kerstening van Holland (zevende tot twaalfde eeuw): Een bijdrage aan de middeleeuwse religieuze geschiedenis," in *Geloof in Holland*, eds. Marijke Carasso-Kok et al., Holland 25 (Hilversum: 1993), 125–55, n. 71.

81 Mostert, "De kerstening van Holland," n. 75.

82 *VaB*, c. 16, 73.

83 Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, in *Vitae sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG 15.1 (Hanover and Leipzig: 1905), 79–89.

stories that might have been told by the first Frisian Christian community, which could have cherished memories of the saint, did not survive the various periods of paganism that the region experienced after 754.

Did a truly flourishing cult of Boniface develop at Dokkum during the Middle Ages? There are a few references to the cult in 13th-century texts, and archaeologists have unearthed five subsequent churches at Dokkum, three wooden ones predating the 10th century, one in turf dating to the beginning of the 10th century, and a 13th-century church.[84] Archbishop Lull had told Willibald, the author of the first *Life*, about events following the murder in 754 involving a miraculous well. According to Lull, the Frisian people and the majority of the notables had decided to raise "an enormous hill because of the enormous difference between ebb and flood," on which a church with accommodation for clerics was to be built.[85] When the hill was all but finished, "the inhabitants and neighbours of the place consulted about the lack of a sweetwater well, because that circumstance caused the people and their cattle in almost all of Frisia trouble."[86] Count Abba, who had ordered the building of the hill, ascended his horse and placed himself at the head of his retinue. He rode around the hill to inspect the work's progress:

> Then the horse of someone from his retinue was in danger because it suddenly stamped its hooves. It risked to sink into the rain-drenched soil and, while it kept its front legs solidly in the soil, it thrashed about until others, who were more mobile and dexterous, quickly jumped from their horses to pull loose the horse which was caught by the earth.[87]

84 For additional details about the development of the cult of Boniface at Dokkum and Utrecht, see Petra Kehl's chapter on the "Veneration of Boniface in the Middle Ages" in this volume.

85 Willibald, *VB*, c. 9, 56–57: "quod … cum consilio plebis atque ingentis partis populi Fresonum structura cuiusdam tumili propter inmensas ledonis ac malinae inruptiones, quae diverso inter se ordine maris aestum oceanique cursum, sed et aquarum diminutiones infusionesque commovent, ab imo in excelsum usque construeretur; super quem denique ęcclesiam, sicut postea gestum est, exstruere cogitabant ac servorum Dei habitationem in loco collocare."

86 Willibald, *VB*, c. 9, 57: "quid incolae habitatoresque loci illius de insulsae penuria limphae, – quae per omnem pene Fresiam maximam tam hominibus quam etiam animantibus difficultatem gignit, – inter se invicem disputarunt."

87 Willibald, *VB*, c. 9, 57: "repente cuiusdam caballus pueri ex inproviso, tantum pedibus terrae inpressis, ruinae pęnitus casuram temptabatur, anterioribusque humo infixis cruribus, volutabatur, donec hii, qui agiliores solertioresque extiterant, discensis suis praepropere caballis, equum terrae inherentem extraherent."

Then the miracle happened:

> A very clear, deliciously sweet-tasting well bubbled up, wholly contrary to the nature of the land, and flowed on in watercourses unknown to us, so that quickly a not inconsiderable brook came into being.[88]

Amazed all went home. This old well also survived, according to the local faithful: it is indicated by a fountain in the corner of the market square.

6 Conclusion

Sketching the missionary work done by Boniface in what was then called Frisia can only be done by referring to the other sources we have for the history of the region. Although Boniface's third and last visit to the area made the most lasting impression due to his murder, his second sojourn in Frisia, between 719 and 721, must have been the most influential for Boniface himself. It is here that he came into contact with missionary practices that, with hindsight, may be termed the "Utrecht model." To succeed in spreading the Word of God four conditions needed to be fulfilled. First, a missionary needed to learn the tools of the trade from an older colleague. Continuity was necessary, and missionary work was a long-term project. Second, missionaries felt the need to be able to retire from the world in the midst of their missionary work. This isolation was also necessary to educate new generations of missionaries. In this way, islets of Christianity could come about. Christianization was rendered possible by the spread of small, new Christian communities from mission centres such as that in Utrecht. Monasteries needed to be founded in territories that were still pagan, or that had come into contact with Christianity only recently. Third, cooperation with secular power was vital for the survival of such missionary monasteries, and thus for Christianization. And fourth, it was clear that Christianization had to start at the top: first the kings needed to be baptised, next the nobles, and finally the rest of the population. It was vital to have the consent of the pagan leaders to preach the Gospel. These were some of the lessons he would have learned at Utrecht in the early 8th century. Boniface proved to be a good pupil of this Utrecht model.

88 Willibald, *VB*, c. 9, 57: "limpidissimus extra consuetudinem illius terrae fons, mirae suavitatis gustu indulcatus, prorumpebat et per incognitos penetrans meatus profluebat, ut rivus iam maximus esse videretur."

PART 4

Veneration and Afterlife

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CHAPTER 15

The Veneration of Boniface in the Middle Ages

Petra Kehl

1 Introduction[1]

The veneration of Saint Boniface in the Middle Ages is concentrated in those areas closely associated with his life and death. The centre for his cult is Fulda in Hesse, Germany. Fulda is where in 744 he had a monastery founded, and today its successor, the Fulda cathedral, holds his body and other relics. Mainz was Boniface's episcopal seat for the last part of his life and the cathedral there holds what we would refer to today as secondary relics of the saint. Mainz was also the seat of his pupil, Lull, who worked to preserve Boniface's reputation by archiving his correspondence and ordered the first *vita* to be written, and so it, too, became a locus for the veneration of Boniface and the study of his legacy. Two places in what is now the Netherlands also maintained Boniface cults from the beginning: Utrecht, which was the starting point of his missionary activities, and Dokkum, where he was martyred in 754. Boniface occupies an important place in the history of both centres of veneration. Finally, in his homeland of England Boniface was celebrated as a national patron saint in the years after his death and he was included in the martyrologies of Bede and others, until the Norman Conquest.

2 Fulda

Because Fulda possessed the most important relic of Boniface it became the primary locus of his veneration from early on. After Boniface's body travelled from the place of his martyrdom, Dokkum, through Utrecht and Mainz, it was given a central and prominent place in what is now the cathedral of Fulda, the successor of the monastery founded there on Boniface's orders in 744.

The community at Fulda interred Boniface in a tomb under the floor at the western end of the church, in a spot he had shown them himself. Sometime

1 This chapter focuses mostly on the medieval veneration of Boniface outside of Fulda. For a more thorough discussion of the development and implications of Boniface's cult at Fulda, see the chapter in this volume by Janneke Raaijmakers.

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between 765 and 770 the monks embellished the tomb with an *arca* and, probably later, erected an altar.[2] Gregor Richter interprets the word *arca* as "shrine," suggesting a structure that rose above Boniface's floor tomb but did not contain his actual bones.[3] The tomb with the relics soon developed into the centre of the monastic life at Fulda as well as the local cult of St Boniface. Here the monks of Fulda revered Boniface as their special advocate, and gathered at his shrine to pray for any newly elected abbot before welcoming him as their father.[4] On this spot they also commemorated their benefactors every Monday by lying flat on the floor, praying and singing psalms.[5]

The significance of the grave for Boniface's cult inevitably influenced the architecture of the new church, the so-called Ratgar Basilica, whose construction was started by the monks in 791 in honour of the martyr.[6] In rebuilding the church the brothers deviated from the hitherto accepted norm: opposite the choir in the east they created a second one in the west particularly dedicated to the worship of Boniface. In this way the monks retained the *patrocinium* desired by their founder and at the same time provided their advocate with his own cultic site.[7]

In 819 Archbishop Haistulf of Mainz consecrated the abbey church. The coffin containing Boniface's relics was raised. Then, intoning the *Te Deum*, Archbishop Haistulf, Abbot Eigil, Abbot Theotgar of Herrieden, and the Fulda monks Ercanbert, Brunward, and Hrabanus Maurus took the coffin onto their

2 Eigil, *VS*, c. 21, 156.

3 Gregor Richter, *Die ersten Anfänge der Bau- und Kunstthätigkeit des Klosters Fulda*, vol. 2, Veröffentlichung des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins (Fulda: 1900), 59. Richter summarizes all the older literature. His findings are also confirmed by Hilde Claussen, *Heiligengräber im Frankenreich* (Marburg: 1950), 268. More recently, Eva Krause, *Die Ratgerbasilika in Fulda* (Fulda: 2002), reevaluated the entire body of archeological scholarship on the abbey church.

4 Candidus, *Vita Aeigilis metrica*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poet. Lat. 2 (Berlin: 1884, repr. 1989), c. 14, 83–4.

5 Josef Semmler (ed.), "Supplex Libellus monachorum Fuldensium Carolo imperatoris porrectus I," in *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum*, vol. 1 (Siegburg: 1963), 321.

6 Scholars have accepted this date as certain since Gregor Richter's findings in "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Grabeskirche des hl. Bonifatius in Fulda," in *Festgabe zum Bonifatius-Jubiläum 1905* (Fulda: 1905), I–LXXVI.iii, note 2. Eckhard Freise, *Die Anfänge der Geschichtsschreibung im Kloster Fulda* (Münster: 1979), 38, however, emphasizes that the three manuscripts which give us the text of the *Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi* agree in the entry *Initium ecclesiae s. Bonifatii* for the year 792.

7 See Arnold Mann, "Doppelchor und Stiftermemorie: Zum kunst- und kulturgeschichtlichen Problem der Westchöre," *Westfälische Zeitschrift* 111 (1961), 230, 233; Werner Jacobsen, "Die Abteikirche in Fulda von Sturmius bis Eigil: kunstpolitische Positionen und deren Veränderungen," in *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, ed. Gangolf Schrimpf, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt am Main: 1996), 105–27.

shoulders and carried the relics through the festively adorned church into the west choir where his new resting place was located. The clerics in attendance followed in procession while the populace pressed forwards in order to touch the coffin containing the saint's bones with their right hands. Amid the jubilant singing of the crowd the body was taken into the west apse while the people shed tears.[8] This translation of the relics was equivalent to a canonization.[9]

Subsequently Boniface assumed the status of the patron of the Fulda monastery, a role which included both intercession for the eternal salvation of the monks and the legal representation of the monastic community. The patron was considered as the actual owner of the monastery: he owned its properties and other assets and legally the monks, too, were dependent upon him. Hence his name occurs not just with every endowment made to the monastery, but also appears on the convent's seals[10] and, on numerous occasions, on the coinage which the Abbot of Fulda had the right to issue since the 11th century.[11]

The patron's feast occupied a prominent position in the liturgy. Fulda monks certainly celebrated 5 June as Boniface's feast day as early as the 8th century, as the oldest Fulda calendar testifies.[12] The *Supplex Libellus* also shows us that the Feast of St Boniface was celebrated annually.[13] The monks at Fulda had their own text for the mass celebrated on the feast day. The mass was composed by

8 Candidus, *Vita Aeigilis metrica*, ed. Dümmler, c. 7, 110–12. Similarly, *Vita Eigilis abbatis Fuldensis auctore Candido*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), 230.

9 Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754–1200)* (Fulda: 1993), 39; Arnold Angenendt, "Zur Ehre der Altar erhoben: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Reliquienteilung," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 89 (1994), 221–44.

10 See Ludwig Weth, *Studien zum Siegelwesen der Reichsabtei Fulda und ihres Territoriums.* Quellen und Forschungen zur hessischen Geschichte 41 (Darmstadt/Marburg: 1980), 15 and 74.

11 See Richard Gaettens, *Das Geld- und Münzwesen der Abtei Fulda im Hochmittelalter unter Auswertung der Münzen als Quellen der Geschichte und Kunstgeschichte, der Wirtschaftsgeschichte und das Staatsrecht*, Veröffentlichung des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins 34 (Fulda: 1957), 30.

12 See Bernhard Bischoff, "Eine Sammelhandschrift Walahfrid Strabos (Cod. Sangall. 878)," in *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 2, ed. Bernhard Bischoff (Stuttgart: 1967), 42. Although the Fulda calendar has been dated to the first half of the 9th century, it reproduces the liturgical calendar from the period before 819. See E. Munding, *Die Kalendarien von St. Gallen aus 21 Handschriften des 9.-11. Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1: Texte und Arbeiten 36 (Beuron: 1948), 19–20, dates the copy of the calendar to ca. 849–50; Winfried Böhne, "Frühmittelalterliche Geschichte Ellwangens nach Fuldaer Quellen," in *Ellwangen 764–1964: Beiträge und Untersuchungen zur Zwölfhundertjahrfeier*, ed. V. Burr (Ellwangen: 1964), 78, to "ca. 830."

13 *Supplex Libellus*, ed. Semmler, c. 14, 325.

Alcuin, Charlemagne's court theologian who had visited Fulda and had prayed at Boniface's shrine. Alcuin took as his model the *oratio* for the Feast of St Paul, sending his mass for Boniface to the monks in a *cartula missalis* together with other votive masses.[14]

One of the sermons preached on the feast day has come down to us. Hrabanus Maurus, the famous scholar and abbot of Fulda, who personally greatly revered the saint,[15] composed a semon comparing the eight beatitudes from Christ's Sermon on the Mount to the life of St Boniface. This sermon by Hrabanus recites no details from Boniface's biography, assuming that the audience was aware of the saint's death and glorious victory.[16] By the end of the 10th century at the latest the Feast of St Boniface was celebrated with particular solemnity in a liturgy containing a vigil and an octave. Fulda sacramentaries with the corresponding texts for mass also have come down to us from this period.[17] The turn of the 10th to the 11th century witnessed the emergence of a new mass formulary for the feast of the saint's ordination as bishop, celebrated on 1 December.[18] Additionally, a mass formulary for a *Missa in veneratione sancti Bonifatii martyris* has been preserved.[19] The Gospel pericope for the Feast of St Boniface, an extract from the Sermon on the Mount beginning with the words *Videns Jesus turbas* (Matthew 5:1–12), is found in a Fulda evangelistary from the 12th century, though its existence can already be deduced from the sermon by Hrabanus Maurus for the Feast of St Boniface.[20]

The patron of the monastery was also commemorated within the context of the Divine Office, with texts probably based on excerpts from Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*. A copy of this *vita* was already present in the monastery library in the

14 *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, vol. 1, ed. Edmund Ernst Stengel, Veröffentlichung der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 10.1 (Marburg: 1958), no. 529, 511–12: "Misi cartulam missalem vobis, o sanctissimi presbiteri, ut habeatis singulis diebus, quibus preces deo dirigere cuilibet placeat: … vel etiam sanctissimi patris vestri Bonefacii cantare quis velit et praesentiam illius piissimam advocare precibus."

15 Hrabanus Maurus, *Homiliae de festis praecipuis, item de virtutibus*, ed. J.P. Migne, *PL* 110 (Paris: 1864), cols. 9–134.

16 Hrabanus Maurus, *Homiliae de festis*, col. 48: "Non ignorare vos credo, fratres, hujus sanctissimi viri probatissimum agonem ac celeberrimam victoriam."

17 Kehl, *Kult*, 32, 99.

18 This mass formulary can be found in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3548.

19 Kehl, *Kult*, 56.

20 This is one of the pericopes listed for the feasts of martyrs in the 12th-century Fulda evangelistary Kassel 4 Ms. theol. 13. The pericope for the Feast of St Boniface can be found on fol. 142v. On dating and location see Bernhard Opfermann, "Ein Perikopenbuch Fuldaer Herkunft," *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekswesen* 50 (1933), 737 and 739.

mid-9th century, probably even earlier, as suggested by a statement in a fragment of a letter from Abbot Hatto to Pope Leo IV.[21] The excerpt must have been produced before 900, hence the *Vita* and the excerpt were directly linked. It was read out in Fulda on the saint's feast day: Section 17 says, "here lies Boniface, whose feast we celebrate today." The text was compiled from Chapters 1, 2, and 8 of Willibald's *Vita*, sections that emphasize the saint's renunciation of the world and his virtue, and recount his martyrdom, sections appropriate for a monastic community. Several historical records attest to the festivity with which the monks at Fulda celebrated the feast day. The altar dedicated to Boniface was decorated for the occasion, and in the middle of the 11th century it was enhanced by Abbot Rohing with a *tabula* made out of gold and precious stones.[22]

Veneration of St Boniface also decisively shaped the monks' self-image. Even before the saint was elevated to the status of co-patron of the monastery in 819, Boniface had already become integral to the identity the young community of monks. The brothers were called the *congregatio sancti Bonifatii* by the outside world and saw themselves as such. This is very clearly articulated in the *Vita* of Sturm, the first Abbot of Fulda, which was composed ca. 817 by Eigil, monk and later abbot at Fulda.[23] Eigil highlights Boniface's decisive role in founding the monastery by emphasizing that his merits and prayers made God reveal the right location for the monastery to Sturm.[24] Ultimately, according to Eigil's account, God Himself had predestined this as his burial site.[25] Eigil also states that the presence of Boniface's relics had caused the monastery to flourish.[26] This shows that by the beginning of the 9th century Fulda monks saw the significance of Boniface not primarily in his missionary activity and his martyrdom, but first and foremost in his roles as founder of their monastery and model monk.

21 *Epistolarum Fuldensium Fragmenta* 31, ed. Dümmler, 530: "Fuit (scil. Hatto) custos librorum. Sic vitam Bonifacii et epistolas pontificum de monasterii sui fundatione sedulo custodiit, ut ipse indicat in epistola ad Leonem."

22 See Richter, *Beiträge*, lix; Konrad Lübeck, *Bonifatiusgrab zu Fulda* (Fulda: 1947), 49–50. Lübeck assumed that it was a retable which adorned the altar on high feast days, while Richter expresses no opinion about the form of this *tabula*. According to Niermeyer's *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon minus* (Leiden: 2002), 1010, *tabula* can mean "antependium."

23 Petra Kehl, "Die Entstehungszeit der Vita Sturm des Eigil: Versuch einer Neudatierung," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994), 20.

24 Eigil, *VS*, c. 9, 141.

25 Eigil, *VS*, c. 16, 150.

26 Eigil, *VS*, c. 16, 150.

3 Mainz

The Feast of St Boniface was probably already celebrated in Mainz as well as England and Fulda soon after his death, especially as the English synod's resolutions on this matter had been communicated to Lull by Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury.[27] The Feast of St Boniface is listed in their earliest extant calendar from Mainz, which probably originated in the beginning of the 9th century.[28] In Mainz, Lull cultivated the memory of his teacher and predecessor and had his correspondence collected. Acting on the suggestions of Bishop Milret of Worcester and others, he instructed a West Saxon named Willibald to write a *vita* of the martyr. This *presbyter*, as Willibald called himself,[29] was probably associated with the church in Mainz.[30] When Willibald started composing the *vita* cannot be precisely determined, but from its dedication to Bishops Lull of Mainz and Megingoz of Würzburg it follows that the *vita* must have been written while the two men held office as bishop. This allows us to narrow the date of composition to between 754 and 768/69.[31] For centuries, Willibald's *Life* of Boniface decisively influenced the saint's image in his cult and in historiography.[32]

Boniface's body made a brief stop in Mainz on its way to Fulda. Although Lull had to relinquish the body to Abbot Sturm to be delivered to the monastery, Mainz apparently retained some of the saint's blood. Hrabanus Maurus, during his tenure as archbishop of Mainz (847–856), composed an inscription for a *tumulus* which he had erected over the blood of St Boniface in St Mary's church.[33] The presence of Boniface's blood in Mainz is explained by the anonymous author of the 11th-century *Vita quarta Bonifatii,* who reports that this

27 Tangl, no. 90.

28 Bernhard Bischoff, "Paläographische Fragen deutscher Denkmäler der Karolingerzeit," in *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. 3, ed. Bernhard Bischoff (Stuttgart: 1981), 105. The same dating is given by W.M. Lindsay and P. Lehmann, *The* (*Early*) *Mayence Scriptory*, *Palaeographia Latina* 4 (1925), 15–39. The calendar was edited by F. Jostes, "*Saxonica*. 1: Die vatikanischen Fragmente, 2: Die altsächsischen Denkmäler in den Essener Handschriften," *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 40, n.s. 28 (1896), 129–59.

29 Willibald, *VB*, c. 1: "Willibaldus licet indignus in Domino presbyter."

30 On Willibald's identity see AA SS Juni 1, 446; Levison, *Vitae*, vii–viii; Tangl, *Leben*, vii–x; G.F. Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Munich: 1975), 239.

31 For an overview of scholarship on this date range, see Kehl, *Kult*, 63.

32 Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (London: 2002), 247. A detailed discussion of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* may be found in Chapter 7 of this volume.

33 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, ed. Dümmler, no. 57, 220.

blood had flowed from the wounds of the deceased when the corpse was being washed after its arrival in Mainz. This mixture of blood and water, called *lotium* in the *Vita quarta*, is said to have been collected by Lull in a vessel which he subsequently buried.[34] The same author tells us that, apart from this *lotium*, items of the dead man's clothing were kept in Mainz and were revered as valuable contact relics.[35] In addition, Mainz claimed to possess the saint's intestines, as can be deduced from an inscription which Archbishop Gerlach of Mainz had mounted on the tomb in 1356 when he replaced the damaged tumulus erected by Hrabanus Maurus.[36] However, the credibility of this information is disputed.[37]

It appears that the relics left in Mainz – if they were actually genuine – were too modest to become the focus of a flourishing cult of St Boniface. Even the efforts of Hrabanus Maurus were not sufficient to intensify the liturgical veneration of the saint in Mainz. The feast of St Boniface is listed in calendars in two 9th-century sacramentaries attributed to the church in Mainz, but neither manuscript includes a *proprium* for the Feast of St Boniface.[38] The lack of a special *proprium* for Boniface suggests that the feast was probably celebrated using the *Commune Sanctorum*. By contrast, the sacramentary Kautzsch No. 4 in the Mainz Cathedral treasury, compiled at the end of the 10th century, should be judged differently.[39] While it does contain a special *proprium* for Boniface, it is only for the saint's main feast day, whereas other Mainz liturgical manuscripts from the same period include *propria* for the vigil and octave.[40] The saint's feast was, then, merely one among many and in no way particularly distinguished. Consideration of the 10th- and 11th-century *pallium* privileges for the archbishops of Mainz yields similar results. These privileges specified on precisely which feast days the current archbishop was permitted to wear

34 *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 10, 101.

35 *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, c. 10, 102.

36 *Die Deutschen Inschriften 2.1: Der Mainzer Dom*, ed. Fritz Viktor Arens (Stuttgart/Waldsee: 1951), 43–4; similarly Anton Brück, "Zur Bonifatiusverehrung in Mainz," in *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum 1200. Todestag* (Fulda: 1954), 508.

37 Johann Friedrich Böhmer and Cornelius Will, *Regesta Archiepiscoporum Maguntinensium* 1 (Innsbruck: 1877), 32, no. 128 rejects the information as unauthenticated.

38 These sacramentaries are found in the Mainz, Priesterseminar, Hs. 1 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 1. 20. Later in the 10th century, propers for the Feast of St Boniface with a vigil and octave were added by a Fulda scribe to Mainz, Priesterseminar Hs. 1. For more detail, see Kehl, *Kult*, 127–28.

39 Hoffmann, *Buchkunst*, 244. For more detail, see Kehl, *Kult*, 128, n. 249.

40 This information is taken from Kautzsch and Neeb, *Dom*, 368.

the *pallium*. The Feast of St Boniface is not listed in any conferrals or confirmations of the *pallium*.[41]

However, it cannot be claimed that the clergy in Mainz completely neglected the Feast of St Boniface. A *benedictio* for his feast day is preserved in a manuscript with episcopal benedictions from the middle of the 11th century.[42] In the text of this prayer Boniface is singled out as the shepherd of the flock consigned to his care who intercedes in Heaven on behalf of those formerly entrusted to him, and defends them through this intercession and protects them though his pastoral care so that they arrive safely in the celestial sheepfold.[43] Here Boniface is accorded prominence as a loyal shepherd of souls and *summus episcopus*, obviously because the benedictions were intended for the use of the archbishop. After Willibald's composition of the *Vita Bonifatii* in the late 8th century, another *Life* of St Boniface was also written in Mainz, the *Vita quarta Bonifatii*.[44] The key dates for the work's origin are the year in which Archbishop Willigis of Mainz died (1011), as he is mentioned as dead; and the period in which Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* was written (1062–1066), since it can be proved that Otloh used the Mainz *vita*.[45] The author of the *Vita quarta Bonifatii* was concerned less with Boniface as martyr than with Boniface as bishop of Mainz, an image of the saint that seems in keeping with its place of origin.

Boniface did not become a fixed feature in Mainz litanies until the 12th century.[46] Invocation of the saint is first attested in a litany dated to after 1150

41 See the Papal Privileges J 2897. JL 3784. *Mainzer Urkundenbuch 1*, ed. Manfred M. Stimming. Arbeiten der Historischen Kommission für den Volksstaat Hessen (Darmstadt: 1932), nos. 217, 134.

42 The text was produced in Lorsch, but most probably intended for use in Mainz; see Hoffmann, *Buchkunst*, 215. Irtenkauf, *Litanei*, 215, gives the 12th century as the period of composition.

43 Princeton, University Library, Garrett Collection 43. The *benedictio* is on fols 56r-56v: "Deus illuminator omnium gentium, qui summi sacerdotii stola et martyrii palma beatum glorificavit Bonifacium, amplificet in vobis sanctarum ornamenta virtutum. Amen./ Et qui illum vobis pastorem constituit ad horam in terris, dignetur eum exaudire iugiter in celo deprecantem pro vobis. Amen. Quo eius fida prece defensi et cura pastorali protecti, laqueos lupi rapacis evadatis et ad angelice mansionis ovilia felici cursu perveniatis. Amen. Quod ipse." My thanks to Jean Preston, Princeton University Library, for the copy and the transcript.

44 Levison, *Vitae*, lix; similarly Tangl, *Leben*, xvii.

45 Werner Meyer-Barkhausen, "Die Versinschriften (Tituli) des Rabanus Maurus als bau- und kunstgeschichtliche Quellen," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 7 (1957), 77–8, gives the date of composition as "*c.* 1020."

46 See Winfried Böhne, "Erzbischof Egbert von Trier und die Fuldaer Schreib- und Malschule des 10. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1990), 98, note 7.

which is found in the *psalterium* Mainz, Priesterseminar, Hs. 11.[47] Boniface's name is also invoked in the litany for the order of baptism in Darmstadt, Hessische Landesbibliothek, MS 3181, p. 93, in a feast and votive missal with rituals produced for use in the Diocese of Mainz around 1175;[48] and also in the litany in the manuscript Aschaffenburg, Hofbibliothek, MS Perg. 30 (post-1200).[49]

In the course of the 12th century an antiphon in honour of Boniface was composed by St Hildegard of Bingen,[50] though unfortunately it cannot be determined whether the antiphon was intended for use at Mainz or at the monastery at Fulda.[51] Mainz was also beginning to produce and display visual images of Boniface in the 12th century. In the years 1189 to 1200 the cathedral cantor, Konrad, donated a picture for the apse of the east choir of Mainz Cathedral which depicted Boniface, as well as Christ and St Martin (the patron saint of the cathedral), along with several other saints.[52] After tentative beginnings, the veneration of St Boniface among the clergy increased in Mainz during the 12th century and gradually gained in prestige.

Boniface acquired immense significance for Mainz as a means of asserting or protecting ecclesio-political claims. Lull had already collected Boniface's letters not only as a memento of his teacher, but also in pursuit of highly political goals. One letter from the collection was of decisive importance to him: Pope Zachary's letter from 745 (Tangl, no. 60) in which he permitted Boniface to found an archbishopric in Cologne. This letter later served as the basis for another letter in the Boniface correspondence which has been proved to be a forgery: Tangl, no. 88. Lull, or someone working for him, took a version of Tangl, no. 60 and substituted Mainz for Cologne and altered the date in an attempt to secure for Lull, as bishop of Mainz, the position of metropolitan. Zachary had

47 See Irtenkauf, *Litanei*, 129.

48 See Leo Eizenhöfer and Hermann Knaus, *Die liturgischen Handschriften der Hessischen Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek*, vol. 11 (Wiesbaden: 1968), 120. Details on the litany are on 123. A formulary for the Feast of St Boniface is not present.

49 See Irtenkauf, *Litanei*, 129.

50 Hildegard von Bingen, *Hildegard von Bingen: Carmina* No. 73, eds. P. Barth, I. Ritscher, and J. Schmidt-Görg (Salzburg: 1969), 290.

51 Adelgundis Führkötter, "Die Liedtexte und ihre Übersetzung," in *Hildegard von Bingen: Carmina*, 211, ascribes it to Fulda. Bruder, "Die liturgische Verehrung des hl. Bonifatius, Apostels der Deutschen, in der Diözese Mainz," *Der Katholik* 32 (1905), 28, note 1, connects it to Mainz. According to Peter Walter, "Die Heiligen in der Dichtung der heiligen Hildegard von Bingen," in *Hildegard von Bingen: Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte,* ed. Anton Brück (Mayence: 1979), 236, it is not possible to reach a conclusion.

52 See Fritz Viktor Arens, "Bonifatiusdarstellungen am Mittelrhein," in *St. Bonifatius* (Fulda: 1954), 589–90; Fritz Viktor Arens, *Inschriften*, no. 14, 19; Kautzsch and Neeb, *Dom*, 165.

granted this to Boniface at the time when the metropolitan seat of Cologne was considered for Boniface, a privilege which had not been extended to his successor in Mainz.[53]

Approximately two centuries later, in 937, when Archbishop Friedrich of Mainz wished the pope to grant him the status of papal vicar and legate, Friedrich put forward the example of his predecessor Boniface, who had already held this office. His request was granted. However, as with Boniface, the new honour was valid only for Friedrich's person and not for the church in Mainz itself.[54] Nevertheless, this status was also later granted to Friedrich's successor Wilhelm.[55]

When the primacy of the church in Mainz was jeopardized in the 11th century, Archbishop Siegfried I, a former Abbot of Fulda, attempted to defend its rights by referring to Boniface's authority. During Siegfried's time in office the Mainz cathedral schoolmaster Gozwin wrote the *Passio sancti Albani martyris*,[56] a depiction of the martyrdom of St Alban of Mainz. This *Passio* includes a detailed description of the history of Mainz that prominently featured Boniface, who is depicted as spreading the Christian faith from Mainz to all of Gaul and Germania. For this reason the pope had granted primacy to the saint and his episcopal see of Mainz,[57] something which the church in Mainz had never actually possessed.

In the *Passio sancti Albani* this primacy is linked to the right of the archbishop of Mainz to crown the king. Gozwin suggests that Boniface himself had already undertaken this act of consecration by the power invested in him as primate. The right of the archbishops of Mainz to administer royal anointing had been challenged by the archbishops of Cologne ever since Aribo (1021–1031) had refused to crown Empress Gisela. The *Chronicon*, composed in Mainz

53 See Theodor Schieffer, *Angelsachsen und Franken.* Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 20 (Wiesbaden: 1951), 1487–489; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius,* 278.

54 Heinz Thomas, "Studien zur Trierer Geschichtsschreibung des 11. Jahrhunderts," *Rheinisches Archiv* 68 (1968), 50; similarly Heinz Thomas, "Erzbischof Siegfried I. von Mainz und die Tradition seiner Kirche: Ein Beitrag zur Wahl Rudolfs von Rheinfelden," *Deutsches Archiv* 26 (1970), 373, and Eugen Ewig, "Kaiserliche und apostolische Tradition im mittelalterlichen Trier," *Trierer Zeitschrift* 24/26 (1956/58), 176.

55 J 2815; JL 3668. UB Mainz I No. 199, 122–23.

56 On this *Passio* see Franz Staab, "Die Mainzer Kirche: Konzeption und Verwirklichung in der Bonifatius- und Theonesttradition," in *Die Salier und das Reich*, ed. Stefan Weinfurter, vol. 2 (Sigmaringen: 1991), 45–7.

57 Gozwin, *Passio sancti Albani martyris*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.2 (Hanover: 1888), c. 27, 989.

by the Irishman Marianus Scotus at the time of Archbishop Siegfried I, also traces Mainz's right of coronation back to Boniface, who is said to have anointed Pippin as king.[58] It is significant that both the primacy and the right of coronation are claimed for Mainz through reference to Boniface, who served to legitimize Mainz's claims.

4 Dokkum and Utrecht

In Dokkum and Utrecht veneration of the saint was cultivated with great intensity from the very beginning. While the Frisians had been compelled to relinquish the precious relic of Boniface's body to the embassy from Mainz, they quickly made the location of the martyrdom the central point of their veneration. Some of his martyred companions had been buried in Dokkum, and their relics came to serve as an appropriate substitute.[59] Later sources attested to the supposed presence at Dokkum of some corporeal relics of Boniface, as well as numerous other contact relics and objects that had apparently once belonged to Boniface, including a gold chalice, a shepherd's crook made of ivory, a tunicle, his chasuble, alb, maniple, stole, his bishop's ring, a silver beaker, and an evangeliary said to have been written by the saint himself. However, nothing definitive can be said about the authenticity of these relics.[60]

A few years after Boniface's death, work was started on a church in Dokkum.[61] Only a few decades later Alcuin composed a rhymed inscription for this church at the request of his pupil Liudger, who as a youth had encountered the eminent missionary and later became bishop of Münster. Alcuin's verses celebrate Boniface and his companions, who he describes as having watered and hallowed the ground on which the church was built with their blood. Hence

58 Marianus Scottus, *Chronicon* a.a. 772, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 5 (Hanover: 1844, repr. 1985), 547. On the question of Boniface's role in the anointing of Pippin, see also Staab, *Kirche*, 45–6, and Rosamond McKitterick, "Constructing the Past in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of the Royal Frankish Annals," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997), 101–29.

59 Eigil, *VS*, c. 15, 148.

60 Peter Bruder, "Die Verehrung des hl. Bonifatius und seiner Martyrgefährten in Holland," *Pastor bonus* 17 (1904/5), 387–88, cites a 1588 publication from Cologne which had been written by a Dokkum man named Kornelius Kemp, and states that a number of objects were preserved in the Premonstratensian Abbey of St Boniface in Dokkum that had apparently once belonged to Boniface, as well as some relics reputed to be Boniface's intestines and cranium.

61 Willibald, *VB*, c. 9, 56–7.

visitors to the church were urged to venerate the martyrs resting there.[62] Alcuin lauds St Boniface and St Paul as patron saints of the church, providing early evidence for the explicit comparison of the Englishman to the Apostle to the Gentiles.

The veneration of the saint in the liturgy was carefully elaborated at both Dokkum and Utrecht. Testimony to this may be found in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the original version of which was probably composed in Utrecht in the first half of the 9th century and which records that the Feast of St Boniface was celebrated annually on 5 June.[63] The feast was probably introduced immediately after the saint's death, as it had been in England. Boniface's pupil Gregory, abbot of the monastery of St Martin in Utrecht and friend of Bishop Lull of Mainz, would have made sure of that.[64] The *Vita altera* also transmits a song sung by the faithful on the occasion of his feast day in which the saint's martyrdom is glorified.[65] Information from 1217 tells us that the church in Dokkum was visited by many thousands of people on the occasion of the Feast of St Boniface.[66] Textual and material sources, such as bronze rings used as devotional objects, show that many pilgrims flocked to Dokkum to celebrate the saint's feast day throughout the Middle Ages and into the 16th century.[67]

Utrecht also possessed relics of the bodies of some of St Boniface's companions, which had been transported with him from Dokkum.[68] Between 899 and 915, relics of St Eoban and St Adalhar, the martyr's most eminent companions,

62 *Versus Alchwini de Ecclesia sancti Liutgeri*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poet. Lat. 1 (Berlin: 1881), 304, n. 38. Also in Altfrid, *Vita Liudgeri* I, ed. W. Diekamp, *Die Vitae Liudgeri*. Die Geschichtsquellen des Bistums Münster 4 (Münster: 1881), c. 20, 24.

63 *VaB*, c. 15, 73.

64 See Hahn, *Bonifaz*, 252.

65 *VaB*, c. 15, 73.

66 Roger de Wendover, *Flores Historiarum* a. a. 1217, ed. F. Liebermann, MGH SS 28, 50–1.

67 The aforementioned 1588 publication from Cologne by Kemp reports that in the 16th century "ex omni Frisia, populorum saepe permulta Christianorum" still made their way annually to Dokkum. Cited from Bruder, *Verehrung in Holland*, 392, n. 1. During the late Middle Ages bronze rings were sold to pilgrims in Dokkum as devotional objects; they bore the inscription S. BONEVASIUS. Such rings have been found in various places in Frisia and testify to the veneration for the saint in that period. See Herrius Halbertsma, "Bonifatius' levenseinde in het licht der opgravingen," *De vrije Fries* 44 (1960), 16–7.

68 Peter Bruder, "Die Reliquien des hl. Bonifatius, Apostels der Deutschen und seiner Martergefährten," *Stimmen und Mitteilungen des Benediktinerordens* 26 (1905), 259, gives the number of Boniface's companions interred in Utrecht as twenty-four. It is far from clear which source he draws on. His note that the dead were buried in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Utrecht is probably based on the *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, c. 13, 88. However, this source mentions only thirteen corpses.

reached Abbot Huoggi of Fulda.[69] Finally, at some unknown time, they were taken to Erfurt, where they were discovered in 1154 during the building of the new cathedral.[70] In addition, Utrecht possessed relics of St Boniface himself, for around 1120 Bishop Godebald of Utrecht made a present of relics of the saint to the church of Notre Dame in Bruges,[71] which consequently venerated Boniface as a secondary patron saint from the 12th century onwards.[72] The relic he presented almost certainly did not originate in Utrecht since it was one of the saint's ribs. It must have gone to Utrecht from Fulda.[73] It is possible that Abbot Huoggi sent it, perhaps together with further relics of the saint, to Bishop Radbod of Utrecht (900–917) as a gift in return for the relics of Saints Eoban and Adalhar. As we learn from his *vita*, Bishop Radbod personally venerated Boniface[74] and probably revised an older version of the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, which had been written in Utrecht.

In these circumstances it is by no means surprising to find the Feast of St Boniface among the oldest saints' feast days celebrated in the Diocese of Utrecht.[75] In a sacramentary from the time of Bishop Balderich of Utrecht (918–976),[76] written after 965, the *proprium* for the saint's feast has been entered by the first hand. The text corresponds to that of the mass for the saint in the Fulda Sacramentary.[77] The Feast of St Boniface also has its own pericope. The evangeliary with capitularies, which probably originated in Utrecht and

69 Evidence for this may be found in the *Martyrologium Fuldense*, ed. Levison, 6, and in the "Catalogus abbatum Fuldensium: Edition der fuldischen Gedenküberlieferung," in *Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda*, vol. I, ed. Karl Schmid, Münstersche Mittelalter-Studien 8.1 (Munich: 1978), 213. The dates follow from the period in office of Abbot Huoggi (899–915) and Bischop Radbod of Utrecht (900–17).

70 *Annales c. Petri Erphesfurdenses mariores* a. a. 1154, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 16, 21: *12. Kal. Maii translatio sancti Adelharii in Erphesfurt. Chronica s. Petri Erfordensis moderna*, a. a. 1154, ed. Holder-Egger, 178: "Eodem anno XII Kal. Maii inventus est sanctus Adelarius et VII Kal Augusti sanctus Eobanus in monasterio sancte Marie virginis Erfordie."

71 Maurice Coens, "Le culte de Saint Boniface et de ses compagnons en l'église Notre-Dame à Bruges," *Récueil d'Études Bollandiennes*, SubHag 37 (Brussels: 1963), 39. See also Bruder, *Verehrung in Holland*, 393–94; Bruder, *Reliquien*, 496–98.

72 Coens, *Culte*, 36.

73 Coens, *Culte*, 40–1.

74 *Vita Radbodi episcopi Traiectensis*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), c. 5, 568–71.

75 P. Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire de s. Martin d'Utrecht," in *Bibliotheca Liturgica sancti Willibrordi* I (Utrecht: 1919–1921), 36.

76 Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Berlin, MS theol. 691. Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire," 141 calls the manuscript a "Sacramentaire de l'éveque Baldéric." On dating and place see Séjourné, 36.

77 See Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire," 147.

was produced around 1050, contains the same pericope for the Feast of St Boniface that was used in Fulda, namely *Videns Jesus turbas* (Matthew 5:1–12).[78]

A Utrecht collectar from the 12th century, previously in the possession of the chapter of St Mary's in Utrecht, also contains a prayer for the Feast of St Boniface from the *proprium* customary in Fulda, with the heading *In natale sci Bonifacii, Eobani, Adalrii*.[79] The entry that follows is rubricated, emphasizing the significance of the feast. The calendar in the *Liber Ordinarius* of St Martin's in Utrecht, which according to Séjourné is the oldest liturgical calendar in Holland and only lists the feasts to be celebrated in the choir, also contains the Feast of St Boniface.[80] Although this *Liber Ordinarius* is preserved only in a single manuscript from the mid-14th century, the text itself dates back to roughly the time around 1200.[81] The Feast of St Boniface was, then, without doubt one of the important feasts in the Diocese of Utrecht and remained so until the Reformation. This is demonstrated by a number of late medieval liturgical manuscripts from Utrecht churches – four missals, an antiphonary, and a gradual.[82]

Together with his companions Eoban and Adalhar, Boniface was included in the litany of the saints in Utrecht.[83] The invocation of St Boniface and his two companions can be found in the litany in Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit MS 424.[84] The evidence of later Utrecht manuscripts also demonstrates that Boniface, Eoban, and Adalhar were a fixed part of Utrecht litanies.[85]

Between 1180 and 1247 Boniface was even co-patron of the Church of the Holy Saviour in Utrecht,[86] which Willibrord had originally chosen as the

78 Darmstadt, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Ms. theol. 1954, fol. 182r. On this manuscript see Eizenhöfer and Knaus, *Die liturgischen Handschriften,* 100–02. Similarly in Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit, MS 416, fol. 151r, evangelistary from the first half of the 15th century, originated in the northern Netherlands (possibly Utrecht), provenance: Abbey of St Peter in Utrecht, see Koert van der Horst, *Illuminated and Decorated Medieval Manuscripts in the University Library Utrecht* (Utrecht: 1989), no. 33, 10.

79 Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit, MS 424, fol 94r.

80 See Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire," 32. For entries relating to St Boniface see 41 and 12.

81 Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire," 3.

82 For a full listing, see Kehl, *Kult*, 137–38, n. 311.

83 Boniface also appears with his companions in the litany in the Psalter of Wolbodo, a cathedral schoolmaster in Utrecht and later Bishop of Liège (Brussel, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9188–9189), which was edited by Maurice Coens, "Anciennes litanies des saints," in *Récueil d'Études Bollandiennes*, SubHag 37 (1963), 223. See also Kehl, *Kult*, 138, n. 312.

84 Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit, MS 424, fol. 170r.

85 See Kehl, *Kult*, 138, note 314.

86 Séjourné, "L'Ordinaire," 13; Rolf Grosse, *Das Bistum Utrecht und seine Bischöfe im 10. und frühen 11. Jahrhundert*, Kölner Historische Abhandlungen 33 (Cologne/Vienna: 1987), 42. In the *Annales Egmundani a. a. 1148*, ed. G.H. Pertz, MGH SS 16, 456, Boniface is named as

cathedral church but whose function had later been taken over by the cathedral of St Martin's.[87] After his translation from Dokkum to Utrecht,[88] Boniface had temporarily been buried in this church, which may have contributed to this late, temporary change in patronage. The cult of St Boniface even influenced the choice of personal names in Utrecht in the 12th century: in two documents from 1161 and 1196 a canon called Bonifacius is listed as a witness.[89]

Apart from this, other bits and pieces of evidence demonstrate, or at least suggest, that individual bishops of Utrecht had a deep personal veneration for Boniface. One – albeit indirect – witness is a letter from Hrabanus Maurus to Bishop Friedrich of Utrecht (820–835) in which the Abbot of Fulda discusses Boniface's activity in Frisia. He considers it sensible for Friedrich to plead for protection and intercession for his office from the saint, pointing out that Boni-face had played a part in setting up the diocese of Utrecht.[90] Moreover, Boniface is the one who had converted Frisia, not just through the Word but also through the shedding of his own blood. Thus he appears to serve as the natural intercessor for the Bishop of Utrecht, in the way that Hrabanus represented him in Fulda. Several decades later, Bishop Radbod endeavoured to imitate the lives of Willibrord and Boniface, who had laid the first foundations of the faith in his see.[91] Through his particular veneration of both saints, Radbod honoured their roles in the conversion of Frisia, just as Hrabanus had previously encouraged Friedrich of Utrecht to do.

The *vitae* written in Utrecht, the *Vita altera Bonifatii* and the *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, likewise show Utrecht's interest in fostering a cult of St Boniface.[92] Levison postulates that the *Vita altera Bonifatii* was probably written in the first half of the 9th century, but was then revised at the beginning of the 10th century by Bishop Radbod of Utrecht before he sent it to the Abbot of Fulda.[93] The

patron of the church in connection with a conflagration in Utrecht: "Sancti autem Salvatoris, quod et sancti Bonifacii templum, sicut veraciter dicitur mirabili eventu gratia Salvatoris conservatum est." Similarly in the *Chronica regia Coloniensis*, ed. Georg Waitz. MGH SRG 87 (Hanover: 1880), which records the same event for 1150.

87 On the Utrecht "cathedral question" see the summary in Grosse, *Bistum,* 35–7.

88 See Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis* I, 36. Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 52. He does not mention the exact site of the burial. Eigil, on the other hand, is more precise: see *VS*, c. 15, 148.

89 Kehl, *Kult*, 139.

90 Hrabanus Maurus, *Epistolae*, ed. Dümmler, no. 13, 400.

91 *Vita Radbodi*, ed. Holder-Egger, c. 5, 571.

92 See Chapter 8 of this volume for a more detailed discussion of the Utrecht *Vitae* of Boniface.

93 See Levison, *Vitae*, liii; Tangl, *Leben*, xv; Brigitte Ahlers, *Die ältere Fassung der Vita Radbodi*. Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe III: Geschichte und ihre Hilfswissenschaften 55 (Bern/Frankfurt: 1976), 60.

Utrecht *Vita altera Bonifatii* has only come down to us in a few isolated manuscripts and, apart from the copy destined for Fulda, it was not disseminated beyond Belgium and the Lower Rhine.[94] It is the source for the text of the Feast of St Boniface in the breviary for the Utrecht Church of 1508 and 1518.[95]

The *Vita tertia Bonifatii* probably also originated in Utrecht.[96] The *Vita* could have been written before 900 since its author used the *Vita Lebuini antiquissima*,[97] but in any case it must have been written before 1075 as Adam of Bremen draws on it in his *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae*.[98] Seen from a historical perspective, the unknown author offers nothing new. The emphasis on the martyrdom in the *Vita tertia* can probably be attributed to the fact that it was written in Utrecht, so close to the site of the saint's martyrdom.

5 England

Boniface was held in high esteem in his native land of England.[99] The Bishop of Worcester, Milret, asked Lull for a detailed account of the new martyr's life and death.[100] This letter reached Lull around 755 at the earliest. Subsequently, in about 760, Lull charged the English monk Willibald, a cleric at Mainz, with composing a *vita*.[101] Another letter reached Lull from Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury (740–758/60) informing his countryman of a decision taken by a general synod to celebrate the anniversary of Boniface's death.[102] When and where this synod took place is not known, but it must have been between 754 (St Boniface's death) and 758/60, when Cuthbert died.[103]

According to English custom at the time, the synod's decision on the liturgical celebration of the anniversary was equivalent to canonization.[104] The same

94 Levison, *Vitae*, liv–lv, lists four manuscripts.

95 I was only able to examine the printed edition from 1508: Utrecht, Rijksuniversiteit, Miscellanea Theologica Folio no. 287.

96 Asserted by Levison, *Vitae*, lvii.

97 See Richard Drögereit, "Bonifatius, die angelsächsische Mission und Niedersachsen," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 52 (1954), 133, n. 13.

98 Wilhelm Levison, *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905), lvi–lviii.

99 Willibald, *VB*, c. 2, 10 and c. 4, 13–4.

100 Tangl, no. 112, 244.

101 Kehl, *Kult*, 63.

102 Tangl, no. 111, 240.

103 See Heinrich Hahn, *Bonifaz und Lul* (Leipzig: 1883), 232, and Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland,* vol. 3 (Oxford: 1871, repr. 1964), 390.

104 See Eric Waldram Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford: 1948), 32 and 35.

synod named Boniface a patron saint of England, placing him in the company of Gregory the Great and Augustine of Canterbury.[105] The Feast of St Boniface was inserted as a supplement into the oldest version of Bede's *Martyrology*, passed down to us in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 451, a manuscript dating from the 9th century.[106] Boniface's death is similarly recorded in the *Continuatio* that was added to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in Northumbria in the 8th century.[107]

Two verses dedicated to Boniface appear in the metrical calendar from York which was written in the third quarter of the 8th century.[108] Michael Lapidge postulates that it is an early work by Alcuin of York or one of his colleagues or pupils, showing that the Feast of St Boniface was celebrated in York by Alcuin's time.[109] It is possible that Boniface's saint's day was celebrated in York even earlier, as Boniface was in close contact with Archbishop Egbert of York throughout his life. Indeed, it was Egbert who sent writings by Bede to his fellow monk on the Continent.[110]

Boniface is also invoked in litanies from early medieval English manuscripts, like the one found in London, British Library, Arundel MS 60. This litany was probably copied after the first quarter of the 11th century from a Winchester source dating to between 988 and 1012.[111] In addition, Boniface appears in a litany in London, British Library, Cotton Galba A.xiv,[112] probably also produced in Winchester, in the second quarter of the 11th century;[113] and in a litany in

105 See Tangl, no. 111, 240.

106 H. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques du Moyen Âge: Étude sur la formation du Martyrologe Romain* (Paris: 1908, repr. Aalen: 1969), 115. St. Gallen Cod. Sang. 451 is available online at https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0451.

107 *Continuatio Bedae* in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave (Oxford: 1969), 574. See Colgrave, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, LXVIII–LXIX. The *Continuatio* covers the period from 731 to 766.

108 For the dating, see Michael Lapidge, "A Tenth Century Metrical Calendar from Ramsay," *Revue bénédictine* 94, nos. 3–4 (1984), 326 and 329. The calendar was edited by André Wilmart, "Un témoin anglo-saxon du Calendrier métrique d'York," *Revue bénédictine* 46 (1934), 41–69. The verses are found only in the manuscript London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian B VI and in the later recension by Erchempert, while they are missing from the rest of the manuscripts.

109 Lapidge, "Tenth Century," 331–32.

110 Hahn, *Bonifaz und Lul*, 172 ff.

111 See Francis Wormald, "The English Saints in the Litany in Arundel MS 60," *Analecta Bollandiana* 64 (1946), 73 and 75–7.

112 Edward Samuel Dewick and Walter Howard Frere, *The Leofric Collectar Compared with the Collectar of St. Wulstan*, vol. II, HBS 56 (London: 1921), 620.

113 Dewick and Frere, *Leofric Collectar*, 618.

Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS. 180, probably from the same period.[114] By contrast, Boniface is only occasionally honoured with his own mass in English sources, for example in London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A.xviii, written between 1061 and 1088;[115] or in the *oratio* and the prayer *Super populum* found in the *Portiforium* of St Wulstan[116] from the period between 1060 and 1070.[117]

Boniface's name appeared in almost every English calendar into the 11th century, though this changed fundamentally after 1100. Of the eighteen calendars from English Benedictine abbeys after 1100 edited by Wormald,[118] only seven still contain the Feast of St Boniface and then usually in the form *Bonifacii martyris*, with the result that the identity of the saint is not necessarily clear, for in the later Middle Ages, St Boniface of Tarsus was also venerated in England on 5 June.[119] That the turning point came around 1100 was no accident: after the Norman conquest of England, Norman abbots were installed everywhere and many early medieval English saints fell victim to what David Knowles has called the Normans' "disrespectful attitude towards the old English saints."[120] Boniface is missing from the calendars of all those Benedictine monasteries whose Norman abbots are known to have been hostile towards the cults of English saints, including the calendars of St Albans, Abingdon, Canterbury, Malmesbury, Evesham, Deeping, and Durham.[121] Despite this development, we encounter Boniface in the odd English liturgical manuscript from the late Middle Ages. A mass for the Feast of St Boniface, with its own formulary, is recorded in the *Ordinale Exoniense* issued by John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, in 1337.[122] In addition, the *Legenda Exoniensis* includes three

114 Dewick and Frere, *Leofric Collectar*, 628.

115 See Francis Wormald, *English Kalendars before A. D. 1100*, HBS 72 (London: 1934, repr. 1988), 99; F.E Warren, *The Leofric Missal as used in the Cathedral of Exeter during the episcopate of its first bishop A. D. 1050–1072* (Oxford: 1883, repr. 1968), 303, dates it to the late 11th century. The text of the mass for St Boniface is reproduced on 304.

116 Anselm Hughs, *The Portiforium of Saint Wulstan*, vol. 2, HBS 89 and 90 (London: 1958–1960), viii. It is the manuscript Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 391. The prayers for the Feast of St Boniface are printed in vol. 1, 126.

117 See Hughs, *Portiforium*, vol. 2, vi. The calendar goes from 1064 to 1093.

118 Francis Wormald, *English Benedictine Kalendars after A. D. 1100*, vol. 2, HBS 77 and 81 (London: 1939 and 1946).

119 John B.L. Tolhurst (ed.), *The Monastic Breviary of Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, HBS 76 (London: 1933), t. III Sanctorale fol. 259.

120 David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940–1216* (Cambridge: 1966), 118.

121 Wormald, *English Benedictine Kalendars*, vol. I, vii.

122 John Neale Dalton (ed.), *Ordinale Exoniense*, HBS 63 (London: 1909), 228 and 348.

readings for the Feast of St Boniface[123] from which suggests that Boniface was born in Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter. Here, then, veneration of the saint is linked to his presumed connection to the Diocese of Exeter. All in all, we may take it as certain that in England Boniface was initially listed in all calendars, but only venerated with his own mass formulary in a few places. From the 12th century onwards his name is seldom found in English calendars, although in a few places his veneration persisted into the later Middle Ages. The memory of the saint gradually vanished, in part because relics which might have functioned as the centre of a cult were not to be found in England. After the Normans invaded England and Norman abbots took over the leadership of English monasteries, the memory of Boniface largely faded into oblivion.

6 The Spread of the Cult of St Boniface

The spread of veneration for St Boniface beyond the actual centres of his cult began as early as the end of the 8th century, as proven by the calendar of the so-called *Godescalc Evangelistary*,[124] which dates from this period. At the request of Charlemagne and his spouse Hildegard this liturgical manuscript was produced in the *scriptorium* at the royal court on the occasion of the king's journey to Rome in 781 to 783.[125] This is Boniface's first appearance in a calendar which did not originate in one of the centres of his cult. Indeed, it is the earliest extant Continental calendar not shaped by English influence that contains his name. Boniface is also mentioned in a litany in the liturgical manuscript known as the Psalter of Charlemagne (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 13159).[126] This sumptuous manuscript did not originate in the court *scriptorium*, although it is certain that it was produced in a large s*criptorium* at the behest of a patron, between Christmas 795 and Christmas 800.[127]

123 John Neale Dalton (ed.), *Legenda Exoniense*, HBS 61 (London: 1926), 248–49.

124 Godescalc was probably a deacon in Liège. See Bernhard Bischoff, "Die Hofbibliothek Karls des Großen," in *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 2, ed. Bernhard. Bischoff (Düsseldorf: 1966), 55, n. 47. Hoffmann, *Buchkunst*, 68 agrees with this identification.

125 The thesis that the manuscript was produced at the court itself was first advanced by Karl Menzel in *Die Trierer Ada-Handschrift*, Publikation der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde VI (Leipzig: 1889); Samuel Berger, *Histoire de la Vulgate pendant les premiers siècles du moyen âge* (Paris: 1893).

126 The litany has been edited by Coens, *Anciennes litanies*, 131–322, 296–97.

127 See François Masai, "Observations sur le Psautier dit de Charlemagne," *Scriptorium* 6 (1952), 300.

Boniface also found his way into the martyrologies. The saint's martyrdom in Frisia is already recorded under 5 June in the first redaction of Bede's *Martyrologium*.[128] The entry in a martyrology written in Lyon before 806 by an anonymous author is somewhat more comprehensive.[129] It records that the saint was born in England and that during his missionary work in Frisia he was killed by heathens. The martyrologies by Ado von Vienne and Usuard, both written around the middle of the 9th century, contain the same text. In the martyrology written by Hrabanus Maurus between 850 and 854, Boniface occupies a special position, with three entries dedicated to him: on his feast day (5 June); on the consecration of the church where he was buried following the translation of his bones (1 November); and, finally, on the day of his anointing as bishop, which took place on 30 November but is listed by Hrabanus on 1 December.[130] Hrabanus's martyrology, as well as that by Ado of Vienne, served Notker of Saint Gall as a source for his own work, written in Saint Gall after 870. Under 5 June he combined the entries from the two martyrologies into one by taking over the account of the saint's martyrdom from Ado and adding to it the list of the saint's companions which he found in Hrabanus's work and which Hrabanus had, for his part, taken over from Bede's martyrology.[131]

The same expanded text is found in the martyrology compiled by Hermannus Contractus for the monastery of Reichenau, who had in turn used the martyrologies by Ado of Vienne and Hrabanus as his source.[132] By contrast, in his martyrology, written ca. 895, Wolfhard of Herrieden provides a rather comprehensive entry for Boniface's feast day that is independent of the earlier martyrologies.[133] The text is based only on Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*. The last in the series of martyrologies written by the Irish Abbot Máel Muire Ua Gormáin (also known as Marianus Gorman) at the end of the 12th century[134] also contains an entry for St Boniface's feast day,[135] but it only includes the saint's name.

128 Jacques Dubois and Geneviève Renaud (eds.), *Édition pratique des Martyrologes de Bède, de l'anonyme Lyonnais et de Florus* (Paris: 1976).

129 See Jacques Dubois, *Les martyrologes du moyen âge latin*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 26 (Turnhout: 1978), 40; Quentin, *Martyrologes*, 220–21.

130 Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium* for 5 June, ed. McCulloh, 54. For 1 November, see 111, and for 1 December, 123.

131 John M. McCulloh, *Rabani Mauri Martyrologium*, CCCM XLIV (Turnhout: 1979), 54.

132 See Quentin, *Martyrologes*, 680; Dubois, *Martyrologes*, 57.

133 Kehl, *Kult*, 219–20. See Dubois, *Martyrologes*, 57; Quentin, *Martyrologes*, 681 considers it to have originated before 895.

134 See Whitley Stokes (ed.), *Félire Húi Gormáin: The Martyrology of Gorman*, HBS 9 (London: 1895), vii; Dubois, Martyrologes, 68.

135 *Félire Húi Gormáin*, 110.

In the 8th century the cult of St Boniface had also taken hold in Würzburg, where Boniface's pupil Megingoz had been bishop, and in the two monasteries of Lorsch and Hersfeld,[136] both closely connected to Lull of Mainz and Fulda. Bishop Liudger was probably responsible for the early celebration of the feast day in Münster and Werden: in his youth he had seen Boniface and had himself been active in Dokkum. Initially, the cult of Boniface was spread primarily through the agency of men who had personally known the saint in life.[137] From the 9th century on the initiative came from the monastery at Fulda, which at that time had reached the height of its prestige. The monastic school of Fulda attracted monks from all corners of the Carolingian Empire who received their education from Hrabanus, and in turn likely helped spread the cult of St Boniface. In this period the monasteries of Saint Gall, Reichenau, and probably also Ellwangen and Prüm included Boniface's feast in their calendar of saints. The monasteries of Einsiedeln, Murbach, Disentis, Pfäfers, and Muri, as well as the abbey at Essen all appear to have celebrated Boniface's feast day by the 10th century.[138] Calendars from the 10th and 11th centuries show that the feast was generally widespread throughout the Holy Roman Empire.

Relics of Boniface were preserved in various churches and monasteries during the Middle Ages. There is evidence that in the 9th century some relics of Boniface were to be found in Holzkirchen, Hersfeld, Höchst am Main, Dreisen, Zell near Kirchheimbolanden, and Freckenhorst. These are either monasteries which were legally dependent on Fulda, or churches which had been consecrated by Hrabanus Maurus. From the 10th century we know of Bonifatian relics in St. Maximin (Trier), St. Emmeram (Regensburg), Aschaffenburg, and Halberstadt. The distribution of relics undoubtedly reached its peak in the following century, with more relics attested now in Prüm, Bamberg, Echternach, Benediktbeuern, Hildesheim, Schaffhausen, Osnabrück, St. Michael in Lüneburg, Hirsau, and Margaretenhaun, mainly in monasteries. In the 12th century there were relics in Erfurt, Zwiefalten, Tegernsee, Springiersbach, St. Eucharius in Trier, Weissenau, and Kerspleben. As a rule, nothing remains of these relics today.[139]

136 A link between Lorsch and Mainz had existed since the consecration of the monastery in 774. The monastery of Hersfeld was founded by Lull. See Kehl, *Kult*, 156–58.

137 See J.W. Grewe, *Der Münsterische Festkalender: Ein Beitrag zur Heortologie und Chronologie des Mittelalters* (Münster: 1941).

138 Kehl, *Kult*, 159–71.

139 For further details about the relics see Kehl, *Kult*, 174–85.

7 Conclusion

Immediately after Boniface's death his cult sprang up in the places which had been especially connected to him either during his life or through his death. In Mainz, Boniface's pupil Lull cultivated the memory of the saint. He had Boniface's letters united in a collection of his correspondence and, at the urging of Bishop Milret of Worcester, commissioned the West Saxon Willibald to write a *Life* of Boniface. Although Lull's attempts to promote the memory of the saint failed to make Mainz into a major cult site, Boniface continued to be commemorated in his former diocesan city and his name was invoked in the pursuit of political goals.

The situation was very different in the monastery of Fulda. After the arrival of the relics a cult developed there which was focused on the saint's grave. In 819, as part of the consecration of the new abbey church, Boniface's bones were moved to the western apse. Boniface occupied the leading position in the veneration of saints in the monastery's liturgy; his richly adorned grave became the focus of all legal acts affecting the monastery.

The saint was also venerated at the site of his death in Dokkum. As early as the first half of the 9th century a *vita* was written in Utrecht, possibly even two. His feast day was celebrated annually in the liturgy there; pilgrims also sought out Dokkum, the place of his martyrdom. It was not until the Reformation that the cult of Boniface declined in Dokkum and Utrecht.

In England, his cult was established by the church hierarchy through a synod shortly after his death. However, this measure did not lead to the veneration of Boniface among ordinary lay people. Rather, his cult remained confined to the clergy, who saw Boniface as a great scholar and heroic missionary who deserved a place alongside the apostles. When the leading positions in the English church were filled by Normans after the Conquest, even clerical veneration of St Boniface ceased.

From the end of the 8th century the saint's cult was spread from Fulda by pupils sent from other monasteries to study there, or through close links between Boniface's monastery and other abbeys. The saint's relics were also disseminated. Initially, they were given only to Fulda's daughter foundations or through the mediation of Hrabanus Maurus. Later, relics made their way to other places thanks to friendly relations between monasteries, yet Boniface's cult remained largely confined to Fulda, Mainz, Utrecht, and Dokkum.

CHAPTER 16

Imitemur nos, qui alumni eius sumus…: Boniface's *Nachleben* in Early Medieval Fulda

Janneke Raaijmakers

1 Introduction[1]

> Sturm, the servant of God, … placing his trust in God, began to pick his way through the wilderness alone … He came to the blessed spot foreordained by God on which the present monastery is built. At the sight of it Sturm was filled with great joy and continued his journey in high spirits, for he realised that God had revealed him this excellent place because of the merits and the prayers of Saint Boniface.[2]

Thus Eigil described the moment that Sturm found a place in the woods of Hessia to build a new monastery: Fulda. His parents, Bavarian aristocrats from the area of Freising, had entrusted him to Boniface as a child, wishing him to pursue an ecclesiastical career.[3] In Fritzlar, one of Boniface's foundations, the boy received his training. After having worked there as a priest for a couple of years, Sturm longed to set up a religious community for himself, so Eigil explained. The place he selected was situated some hundred kilometres south of

1 The phrase quoted in the title comes from Hrabanus Maurus, *Homilia*, *PL* 110, no. 24, 49B. This article elaborates on the research conducted for my book *The Making of the Monastic Community of Fulda, c. 744–c. 900* (Cambridge: 2012). While the remembrance of Boniface and Sturm is further analysed in this article, some aspects of the historical background are more extensively covered in the book. I refer to it when necessary. I thank Mayke de Jong, Irene van Renswoude, Jaap-Hein Vruggink and the editors of this volume for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this article.

2 Eigil, *VS*, ed. Pius Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigils von Fulda: Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 29 (Marburg: 1968), c. 9, 141. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

3 Eigil, *VS*, c. 2, 132. Regarding Sturm's (and Eigil's) origin, see Wilhelm Störmer, "Eine Adelsgruppe um die Fuldaer Äbte Sturm und Eigil und des Bischofs Baturich von Regensburg in Fulda," in *Gesellschaft und Herrschaft: Forschungen zu Sozial- und Landesgeschichtlichen Problemen vornehmlich in Bayern. Eine Festgabe für Karl Bosl zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Richard von Dülmen (Munich: 1969), 1–34.

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Fritzlar, in the woods of Buchonia, close to the river that would give the new monastery its name.

Fulda was the last of Boniface's foundations and, given the ways in which Boniface would devote himself to its cause, by selecting the abbey as his burial place and lobbying for a papal exemption to protect it from unwanted episcopal intervention, it seems to have been his favourite.[4] Fulda was certainly most successful in claiming Boniface's heritage and saintly patronage after his death, since the monks had decided to turn his grave into a cult site. In hindsight it seems as if Boniface impressed his cult upon the community when he chose to be buried there, and his bodily presence demanded the monks' full attention and devotion. Writing more than sixty years after Boniface's burial, Eigil recorded in his *Vita Sturmi* how much Fulda benefitted from the martyr's presence, since it inspired noble families to transfer their goods and sons to the monastery.[5]

But the process of developing the saint's cult was neither self-evident nor uncontested. For one, Mainz, the city where Boniface had been bishop, did not have the martyr's body, though it had collected the water with which Boniface's body had been washed (the so-called *lotium*), when it paused there on its way to Fulda; this liquid was cherished as a powerful relic because it contained the martyr's blood.[6] The new bishop of Mainz was, moreover, quick to produce a written account of Boniface's life, and thereby a particular image of the saint.[7] In this way, Mainz confronted Fulda with a rival claim to the memory of Boniface. Furthermore, Mainz kept a collection of Boniface's letters, his own words and teachings, copies of which were also sent to Fulda.[8] The presence of the

4 Tangl, no. 86, 193 and no. 89, 203–05.

5 Eigil, *VS*, c. 15, 150.

6 First witness to the veneration of blood of Boniface in Mainz is a *titulus* written by Hrabanus Maurus: *Carmina*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poet. lat. 2 (Berlin: 1884), no. 57, 220. See also: *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover and Leipzig: 1905), c. 10, 101. With regard to other Boniface relics in Mainz, and Boniface's cult in other places, see Petra Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des Heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754–1200)*, QAGADF 26 (Fulda: 1993), 123–24.

7 Willibald, *VB*, ed. Wilhelm Levison. MGH SRG 57 (Hanover and Leipzig: 1905), 1–58. For an analysis of the hagiographical corpus relating to Boniface and the influence of contemporary interests on how the saint was portrayed, see Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (Harlow: 2001), 57–78, 86–9, and 100–06, and Chapters 7 and 8 in this volume.

8 Tangl, vi–xxix; idem, "Studien zur Neuausgabe der Bonifatius-Briefe," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesammtausgabe der Quellenschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters* 40, no. 3 (1916), 641–760.

martyr's relics at Fulda brought prosperity and new recruits to the monastery, but also pilgrims, and with them new challenges for what was once a modest community of prayer and asceticism. Not all monks, as we will see, were pleased with the changes brought about by Fulda's rapid growth.[9] And finally, there was another figure in Fulda's past closely tied to the monastery's existence, suitable to serve as an emblem of communal solidarity. That it is difficult for historians to determine whether it was Sturm or Boniface who initiated and supervised Fulda's foundation – the *Vita Sturmi* offers just one version of the events, and other sources shed a different light on the matter – indicates the complexity of the process of establishing a religious community.[10] Several actors were involved, each with his own interests, each backed by his own social network. In addition, we must take into account the influence of imagination on the complicated paths of memory.[11] Both Boniface and Sturm had played their parts in the foundation of Fulda.

This chapter will explore the process of remembering and creating images of Boniface that took place at Fulda, as the community established itself and adapted to its changing needs. It traces the history of Boniface's *Nachleben* in Fulda from his death in 754 until around 856, the year in which one of his most famous and influential devotees, Hrabanus Maurus, died. Since Petra Kehl deals with the veneration of Boniface in this volume, this chapter will not focus on Boniface's cult as such, though it should be noted that commemoration and veneration were closely tied together. It is quite difficult to detach the memories of the historical figure Boniface from the later images, created for the purpose of veneration. This chapter is about this process of imagination; it focuses on how the monks of Fulda imagined Boniface as they made him into their patron saint. They tied him to their monastery, spatially as well as temporally, by marking his historical, physical presence in their living space and by integrating important moments of his life in their liturgical practice and in their communal perception of the Christian past.

9 It was probably one of the causes of the so-called Ratger crisis. See pages 388–390 below for further references.

10 Examples of other sources describing the foundation of Fulda will be discussed below. Studies of Fulda's initial phase include: Dieter Geuenich, "Bonifatius und 'sein' Kloster Fulda," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 295–301; Karl Schmid, "Die Frage nach den Anfängen der Mönchsgemeinschaft in Fulda," in *Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Karl Schmid, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 8, vol. 1 (Munich: 1978) (abbreviated in what follows as *FW*), 108–35.

11 Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: 1999); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London/New York: 1991).

To understand Boniface's meaning for the Fulda monks I will compare his *Nachleben* in the monastic community to the remembrance of Fulda's other founder, Sturm. As I hope to show, Boniface became Fulda's patron saint and main representative in external relations, but it was Sturm who came to be remembered as Fulda's first abbot and founder. For the monks, Sturm was one of them, whereas Boniface's otherworldly status made him something of an outsider. Yet despite his status as a distant, mighty figure, the monks of Fulda continued to seek a connection to Boniface, whose martyrdom made him their most powerful intercessor.

2 Boniface as Representative of Fulda

Besides the primary evidence of liturgical commemoration of Boniface and physical changes to his burial site that turned it into a cult centre, the charters are early sources that record the growing importance of Boniface to the Fulda community and his changing status. These written documents served as evidence of the donations, precarial grants, and sales relating to Fulda. Only three original charters still exist from the period under scrutiny, all royal diplomas. The rest – private, royal, and papal charters – survive in a 9th-century cartulary, an early 10th-century *rotulus* that contains all important royal grants up to the 920s, some separate copies of individual charters and, finally, the *Codex Eberhardi*, compiled in the 12th century on the basis of older material to defend Fulda's property rights.[12] Although in all cases we need to take into account the problematic transmission history of these documents, the authors of these later compilations seem to have copied the description of the persons and institutions involved faithfully.[13] Therefore the charters offer interesting source material to study the position of Boniface with regard to Fulda's self-representation.

12 Fulda's charters have been edited by Edmund Ernst Stengel, *Urkundenbuch des Klosters Fulda*, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 10, 2 vols. (Marburg: 1913–1958), henceforth abbreviated as *UBF*, and Ernst Friedrich Johann Dronke, *Codex diplomaticus Fuldensis* (Kassel: 1850), abbreviated as *CDF*. The *Codex Eberhardi* was edited by Heinrich Meyer zu Ermgassen, *Der Codex Eberhardi des Klosters Fulda,* 4 vols., Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen 58 (Elwert and Marburg: 1995/1996 and 2009). Quite a lot has been published on Fulda's charters and their transmission. I refer here only to Stengel's seminal work on the charters, published in several issues of *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* and *Archiv für Diplomatik*, and collected in *Abhandlungen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Reichsabtei Fulda*, Veröffentlichungen der Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins 37 (Fulda: 1960), abbreviated as *AUGRF*. For further references, see the bibliography and footnotes in Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 49–50, 198–213.

13 *UBF*, XXV–XXXV.

In the years immediately following Boniface's death the charters remember him as the person who constructed the monastery and they recall his bodily presence, using the common formula "Fulda, which is constructed in honour of the Holy Saviour, which Saint Boniface has newly created, where the body of the precious martyr rests."[14] Boniface's role as founder of Fulda is corroborated by other, early sources, such as his own letter to the pope asking for a papal privilege in 751, which states that Fulda was his foundation.[15] The originals of both the charter of Carloman, mayor of East Francia (742–747), granting Boniface the piece of land to found a monastery (744), and the papal privilege, which at the request of Boniface placed the monastery under the direct authority of Rome, are no longer extant, yet Eigil probably used Carloman's charter for the description of Fulda's foundation in the *Vita Sturmi*.[16] Of the papal exemption several later copies exist (the earliest dating to the late eighth or early 9th century); they are discussed by Michel Aaij in the chapter on the Boniface correspondence in this volume.[17] What matters here is that all these sources mention Boniface as the receiver of the grants and the founder of Fulda.

From the later 760s onwards, however, the private charters no longer recall that Boniface had been involved in Fulda's foundation.[18] Instead, they focus on the location of the monastery and include the name of the ruling abbot: "monasterium sancti Bonifatii, quod est constructum super fluvium Fulda" and/or "in pago Grapfeld."[19] The monastery is referred to variously as "Fulda," "the monastery of the Holy Saviour," "the monastery of the Holy Saviour and St Peter," or "the monastery of the Holy Saviour and Boniface," but in the course of time "the monastery of Saint Boniface" became popular to designate the abbey in

14 *UBF*, no. 34, 61: "Fulda, qui est constructus in honore sancti salvatoris, quem sanctus Bonefatius a novo construxit opere, ubi ipse praeciosus martyr corpore requie[scit]."

15 Tangl, no. 86, 193.

16 Eigil, *VS*, c. 12, 143; *UBF*, no. 4, 1–6. The charter probably still existed in the later Middle Ages. For more on the *Vita Sturmi*, see pages 390–391 below.

17 Michael Tangl, "Die Fuldaer Privilegienfrage," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 20 (1899), 193–252; Edmund Ernst Stengel, "Fuldensia I. Die Urkundenfälschungen des Rudolf von Fulda," *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 5 (1914), 64–81 (repr. in *AUGRF*, 27–146); Hans Hubert Anton, *Studien zu den Klosterprivilegien der Päpste im frühen Mittelalter: Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Privilegierung von St. Maurice d'Agaune* (Berlin: 1975), 86–92.

18 Exceptions are *UBF*, no. 54, 89–90 and no. 79, 140–47. Another exception is the confirmation of the papal privilege of 943: *CDF*, no. 685, 318.

19 Examples are *UBF*, nos. 49, 51 and 52, on pages 83–8.

relation to the outside world.[20] Although "the monastery of Saint Boniface" was not the only label for Fulda in the charters, many of them mention that Boniface was buried in the monastery. His grave was at the centre of the transactions between the monks and their benefactors, as the focal point of the written records of these events. Some charters explicitly mention that donations took place "ad reliquias sancti Bonifatii" and from the 12th century onwards gifts were often made "ad altare sancti Bonifatii."[21] From the *Supplex Libellus*, discussed in more detail below, we know that in the period before 802 the monks gathered each Monday at the grave of Boniface to remember Fulda's benefactors.[22] In addition, Boniface's feast day was turned into "payday" during Ratger's abbacy (802–817): those who held monastic land in benefice brought the monastery its share on that day, 5 June, when they were probably also expected to attend the festivities held in honour of the martyr.[23]

Boniface was not only put forward as a means of connecting local communities and aristocratic families to the monastery, but also as a means of associating Fulda with and differentiating Fulda from other religious communities. Reichenau's confraternity book, compiled in the 820s, lists the names of more than fifty religious communities as part of a huge network of prayer. In this list the Fulda community is referred to as "the congregation of Saint Boniface from the monastery that is called Fulda," signalling that the monks living there were Boniface's own.[24] In the *Notitia de servitio monasteriorum*, a record made by order of Emperor Louis the Pious in the early years of his reign to register the services of the royal abbeys under his care, some religious communities were designated by their geographical name, others were represented by their patron saint. Fulda was called "the monastery of Saint Boniface."[25] When Alcuin wrote to the monks around 801/2, sending them a compilation of votive masses

20 For example *UBF*, nos. 25, 37–8, 44, 48–50, 52, 55–6, 58, 63–4, 66, 70–1, 73, 75–6, 80–1. See also Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 50, note 43.

21 For example *CDF*, nos. 392, 404, 529, 772, 773, 781, 792, 795, 805, and 806. Kehl, *Kult*, 95.

22 *Supplex libellus monachorum Fuldensium Carolo imperatori porrectus*, ed. Josef Semmler, *Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum* 1 (Siegburg: 1963), c. 1, 321.

23 Kehl, *Kult*, 46; Konrad Lübeck, *Das Bonifatiusgrab zu Fulda* (Fulda: 1947), 106; idem, "Die Wirtschaft des Klosters Fulda in der Karolingerzeit," *Fuldaer Studien* 3 (1951), 75–90, n. 187.

24 "Nomina fratrum de congregatione sancti Bonifacii de monasterio, quod Fulta nominatur." Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. hist. 27, fol. 31v, p. 36; *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau* (*Einleitung, Register, Faksimile*), eds. Johann Autenrieth, Dieter Geuenich, and Karl Schmid, MGH Libri mem. NS 1 (Hanover: 1979), 194–204. A digital facsimile is available at http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/zbz/Ms-Rh-hist0027.

25 *Notitia de servitio monasteriorum*, ed. Petrus Becker, Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum 1 (Siegburg: 1963), 483–99; and Alfred Boretius (ed.), MGH Cap. 1 (Hanover: 1883), no. 171, 350–52.

he had written at their request, he addressed them as "fratres sancti Bonifatii."[26] So Boniface, over Sturm, became Fulda's most prominent patron when defined in relation to the outside world. In the sources studied so far, Sturm is not mentioned, apart from in his capacity of receiver of grants as abbot of Fulda.[27] By the 760s, Boniface's involvement in the actual construction of the monastery faded into the background and was no longer emphasised in charters.

3 *Memoria*: Remembering Fulda's Past

While the charters promote Boniface's status as Fulda's most precious relic, he is less prominent in the so-called *Annales necrologici* and the *Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi*, which deal more directly with the monks of Fulda. At the end of Sturm's abbacy, in the late 770s, the monks of Fulda started to keep written records of past events in the margin of Easter Tables and to list the names of their dead in a separate, commemorative book. Both forms of record keeping were kept up to date at intervals. In addition, they were both used in the mother convent as well as in dependencies of the monastery.[28] It seems that these texts, besides having a commemorative function, were important tools to tie the rapidly growing and dispersed community together. Around 825, less than a third of the monastic population was living in the mother convent, mainly the elderly monks and the pupils who were receiving their training. The rest of the monks worked and lived in the monastic dependent houses, administering Fulda's property.[29] It is likely that even before 825, when Fulda's rural estates and the number of monks started to expand considerably, many monks resided

26 Alcuin, *Epistolae*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. sel. 4 (Berlin: 1895), no. 250, 404.

27 Sturm does head the list of deceased monks included in Reichenau's confraternity book, which was probably copied from an earlier example, kept in Fulda. See below, note 34.

28 Again, quite a lot of work has been done on these forms of record keeping. I refer here to the work of Richard Corradini, "Zeiträume – Schriftträume: Überlegungen zur Komputistik und Marginalchronographie am Beispiel der *Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi*," in *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens: Soziales Gedächtnis, Herrschaft und Besitz*, eds. Walter Pohl and P. Herold. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 5 (Vienna: 2003), 113–66, and the studies of the *Societas et fraternitas* project supervised by Karl Schmid and Joachim Wollasch, among others, *Die Klostergemeinschaft von Fulda im früheren Mittelalter*, which includes detailed analyses and an edition of the *Annales necrologici*. Also important is Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: 2004). For more references see Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 55–71.

29 Karl Schmid, "Mönchslisten und Klosterkonvent von Fulda zur Zeit der Karolinger," in *FW* 2.2, 585–88; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 185.

outside the mother convent.[30] One of the ways in which all the monks were made part of "Fulda," regardless their place of residence, was through collective commemoration of the dead members of the community and communal remembrance of a shared past. Both the historical notes and lists of names, written expressions of this shared identity, were used to create coherence and continuity, and they offer interesting insights into Boniface's position in the monastery's self-perception.

In the 19th century the historical notes were misleadingly edited separately from the Easter Tables and labelled "Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi," but for the monks, they were more than mere annals. These notes were part of a way of reckoning time and understanding themselves in relation to God's order by linking the succession and fate of ruling dynasties and local history with the liturgical cycle of Easter.[31] Alongside the tables, which indicated per year when Easter was to be celebrated, the monks recorded the deaths of members of the Carolingian family and of important figures as Sturm and Lull of Mainz, as well as events such as the foundation of their monastery. Boniface was also part of this particular self-representation, yet he was not remembered for his role in the monastery's construction but for his otherworldly position, gained through the martyrdom that made him a powerful intermediary on behalf of the monks. The monks marked the year of his death, as well as the start of the construction of Fulda's new abbey church in 791.[32] By calling it "the church of Saint Boniface" the scribes might have revealed what to them was the main goal of this new building: the veneration of the saint. The authors of this form of record keeping seem to have been more focused on the promulgation of Sturm's remembrance, rather than Boniface's, at least in the case of one manuscript. In Kassel, Hessische Landesbibliothek & Murhardische Bibiliothek (Gesamthochschulbibliothek) 2° ms. astron. 2, a textbook used in Fulda's monastic school, a scribe had marked the first anniversary of Sturm's death in the margin of the tables, as well as the tenth anniversary, the twentieth, and so on, and thereby anchored the remembrance of Sturm in this particular

30 Schmid, "Mönchslisten," 572–96.

31 Corradini, "Zeiträume – Schriftträume," 113–66; idem, "The Rhetoric of Crisis: Computus and *liber annalis* in Early Ninth-Century Fulda," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, eds. Maximilian Diesenberger and Helmut Reimitz, Transformation of the Roman World 12 (Leiden/Boston: 2003), 269–321.

32 Kassel, Hessische Landesbibliothek & Murhardische Bibiliothek (Gesamthochschulbibliothek) 2° ms. astron. 2, 4r. A digital facsimile is available at http://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1327910656180/12/ [last accessed in March 2018].

representation of human time.[33] Interestingly no explicit link is made between Sturm and the foundation of the monastery.

The book which recorded the deaths of monks, called *Annales necrologici* by 19th-century scholars because of its internal structure, shows that Sturm's remembrance was closely interwoven with the commemoration of the monastic community and Fulda's own past, while Boniface, though once intimately involved in this past, had become part of the heavenly community of saints.[34] All the extant commemorative lists are headed by Sturm.[35] He is listed as Fulda's first abbot, without any reference to Boniface, whose name is also not included in the diptych which precedes the oldest extant copy of the *Annales necrologici*. It lists the members of the Carolingian family, as well as the (arch)bishops of Mainz, yet, the first bishop listed is Boniface's successor, Lull.[36] Boniface's absence in the *Annales necrologici* is revealing with regard to his status in Fulda.[37] By the time of the production of the extant manuscripts, he was an established saint in the monastery. His commemoration had apparently developed separately from the remembrance of the dead members of the monastic community, a group that included Sturm.[38] Chance probably also played a role. The name of Leoba, Boniface's kinswoman, whose cult was in particular promoted by Abbot Hrabanus Maurus (822–842), was added in.[39] Leoba died

33 Kassel, Hessische Landesbibliothek & Murhardische Bibiliothek (Gesamthochschulbibliothek) 2° ms. astron. 2, fols. 1r-8v; Corradini, "Zeiträume – Schrifträume," 139.

34 Five fragments of the *Annales necrologici* are still extant, the earliest dating to around 875. Yet, although they were all composed much later, the organising principle of the *Annales necrologici* and the ideas underlying its composition have their roots in the late 770s.

35 Rome, BAV, Otto. Lat. 2531, fol. 6v: "… Styrmi qui praefati monasterii abb[as] prim[us] fuit." Also two other extant fragments start with Sturm: Fulda, Hessissche Landesbibliothek, Hs. B1, fol. 5v and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4012, fol. 1r.

36 Rome, BAV, Otto. Lat. 2531, fol. 6r; *FW* 1, 215–16. The other extant diptych, composed some fifty years later, does include Boniface: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4012, fol. 5v; *FW* 1, 216. The aim of this list was markedly different from the earlier diptych, as it attempted to establish a long, continuous tradition of bishops in Mainz, reaching back into the 5th century. For an analysis, see Franz-Josef Jakobi, "Zu den Amtsträgerlisten in den Überlieferung der Fuldaer Totenannalen," in *FW* 2.2, 505–25; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 279–83.

37 Compare for example to the confraternity book of Reichenau, which does include its patron saint. Geuenich, "Bonifatius und 'sein' Kloster Fulda," 299.

38 Another commemorative list, compiled between November 781 and the beginning of January 782 and later included in Reichenau's confraternity book, shows that Sturm was identified with the community of dead monks. The heading of the list is "STURM ABB." Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, MS Rh. hist. 27, fol. 32v, p. 38; *Verbrüderungsbuch Reichenau*, 36–8; *FW* 1, 227–30.

39 For Hrabanus and his promotion of Leoba's cult, see below. Regarding the inclusion of outsiders in the *Annales necrologici*, see Franz-Josef Jakobi, "Die geistlichen und weltlichen

in 782, that is, after the monks started their "Liber mortuorum," whereas Boniface had been long dead when the monks began keeping their list.

Another source, the so-called *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, shows that in records of Fulda's communal past, Boniface's role in the monastery's history became less prominent as he developed into Fulda's patron saint. The *Chronicon Laurissense breve* was originally produced in Lorsch and mostly focused on the whereabouts of the Carolingian family as well as major events for the Lorsch community, such as the translation of the patron saint Nazarius. Boniface is mentioned in the chronicle not as founder of Fulda but as bishop of Mainz and Apostolic legate, and he is honoured for his role in the spread of Christianity and the establishment of an ecclesiastical structure east of the Rhine. His death is recorded, but not his burial in Fulda. A copy of the chronicle arrived in Fulda around 807, where it was updated until circa 818, but apparently no Fulda scribe felt the need to supplement the older text produced in Lorsch with events specific to their own community.[40] The first time Fulda is mentioned in the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* is in relation to an epidemic that killed many monks in 807.[41] By that time the manuscript was in Fulda, where it was used until 818. The author spoke of "our monastery, that is [the monastery] of Saint Boniface" and each time Fulda is mentioned, the community is referred to as Boniface's monastery. In this way, the *Chronicon Laurissense breve* remembers Boniface as a patron saint, cherished for his saintly status and the presence of his relics, not so much for his historical contribution to the establishment of the monastery itself.

4 Debates about Boniface's Legacy

This does not mean that by the 810s the monks had completely forgotten Boniface's share in Fulda's foundation or that his importance as a founding father had faded. In fact, at the same time that Fulda scribes were continuing the *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, Boniface's legacy again became a topic of fierce debate when Abbot Ratger (802–817) tried to implement some major reforms in Fulda. Apparently Ratger had justified his reforms by stating that the "instituta sancti Bonifatii" were not in accordance with conciliar prescriptions; they

Magnaten in den Fuldaer Totenannalen," in *FW* 2.2, 792–887; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 74–9, 276–92.

40 The foundation of Fulda is not mentioned at all. The last event which was recorded was the deposition of Abbot Ratger.

41 *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, ed. Franz Schnorr v. Carolsfeld, *Neues Archiv* 36 (1911), 37.

were not "regulariter," according to the rule.[42] What he meant by these "instituta," and to which council Ratger referred, is unclear. We do not know if he used Boniface to designate Fulda, as the sources mentioned above do when they talk about "the monastery of Boniface," and thus whether he referred to the monastery's customs in general, or if he was talking about specific principles that Boniface had once introduced in the monastery.[43] What is clear, though, is that many monks associated their mode of life with Fulda's early days and the instructions once given by Boniface and Sturm.

Ratger's reorganisation upset several of the monks.[44] They listed their grievances against the monastery's management in a petition, a *Supplex Libellus*, and offered this to the emperor in 812.[45] In it, they defended the "regulations of Saint Boniface." They did not define the *instituta* in detail, but selected those changes to monastic life under Ratger that according to the signatories threatened Fulda's *raison d'être*. They addressed issues regarding the contents, frequency, and time and place of liturgical celebrations and commemorations (a topic that would certainly have interested the emperor who sustained his realm by prayers), the recruitment of new members, the internal organisation of the monastery, and the reception of guests.[46] They backed their wishes by appealing to a venerable tradition which had been established in the time of their "fathers" (*nostri patres*, *nostri maiores*), a recent past which they saw as a golden age of peace and happiness. They did not specify who these fathers had been, or who had instituted what and when. The monks only named Boniface and Sturm as the initiators of these customs when discussing the appropriate

42 *Supplex Libellus*, c. 18, 326. Josef Semmler has identified this council as the council of Aachen 816: "Studien zum *Supplex Libellus* und zur anianischen Reform in Fulda," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 69 (1958), 286–88. Dominikus Heller believed that the council concerned is the council of Pippin III to which Eigil referred in the *Vita Sturmi*: Heller, *Die ältesten Geschichtsschreiber des Klosters Fulda*, Veröffentlichung des Fuldaer Geschichtsvereins 30 (Fulda: 1952), 45. Compare Steffen Patzold, "Konflikte im Kloster Fulda zur Zeit der Karolinger," *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 76 (2000), 112ff.

43 Boniface did not leave a written rule or any other kind of monastic programme. We know that Boniface favoured the Rule of Benedict as a monastic guideline, but he did not rely on the rule in all its details and was trained himself in a mixture of monastic traditions. See Christopher Holdsworth, "Saint Boniface the Monk," in *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton*, ed. Timothy Reuter (Exeter: 1980), 54–7; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 36–8.

44 For an analysis of the Ratger crisis see: Josef Semmler, "*Instituta sancti Bonifatii*: Fulda im Widerstreit der Observanzen," in *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen. Kultur – Politik – Wirtschaft*, ed. Gangolf Schrimpf, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Fulda: 1996), 79–103; Patzold, "Konflikte," 105–39; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 119–31.

45 *Chronicon Laurissense breve*, a. 812, 38.

46 *Supplex Libellus*, 320–27.

dress for monks and how the monastery should sustain its way of life. They recalled that Sturm had spent a year in Monte Cassino, Benedict's monastery, to learn from the monks there how to live consistent with the Benedictine Rule.[47] On his return, Sturm reformed the dress code and the ways to provide for the monastery's upkeep in accordance with the practices of Monte Cassino, and did so with the support and by order of Boniface himself. These were the customs that the authors of the *Supplex Libellus* wished to restore. Although we can no longer retrieve what Boniface's *instituta* contained precisely, what matters here is that Ratger's reforms incited an awareness of a venerable, old tradition, now under threat, that was closely associated with Boniface and Sturm. This same awareness and focus on Fulda's origin lies at the heart of the *Vita Sturmi*.

5 Sturm as First Abbot and Founder of Fulda

Eigil wrote the *Vita Sturmi* around the time he became abbot of Fulda in 818, in the aftermath of the Ratger crisis.[48] It is a biography of his kinsman Sturm as much as a foundation history. Like the authors of the *Supplex Libellus*, Eigil turned to Fulda's early years as the origin of Fulda's identity, but contrary to the petition, Eigil did not wish to undo all recent developments. Instead, he attempted to reconcile ancient traditions with current reforms and to unite a divided community by pointing to their shared origins. In the *Vita Sturmi* Boniface plays a prominent role as initiator of Fulda's monastic tradition, which in the course of time had been adapted to current needs. For example, Eigil recalled how Fulda's first monks, contrary to the prescriptions of Eigil's time, had drunk weak beer instead of wine on the order of Boniface.[49] Eigil portrayed Boniface as God's intermediary and a spiritual master who worked from a distance to steer Sturm in the right direction: we saw how through Boniface's

47 *Supplex Libellus*, c. 10, 324. See also Rudolf of Fulda, *Vita Leobae abbatissae Biscofesheimensis*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), c. 10, 25.

48 Regarding the dating of the text I follow Petra Kehl and Gereon Becht-Jördens. Kehl, "Die Entstehungszeit der *Vita Sturmi* des Eigil: Versuch einer Neudatierung," *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994), 11–20; Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Text, Bild und Architektur als Träger einer ekklesiologischen Konzeption von Klostergeschichte: Die karolingische *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus von Fulda (ca. 840)," in *Hagiographie und Kunst: der Heiligenkult in Schrift, Bild und Architektur*, ed. Gottfried Kerrscher (Berlin: 1993), 81, n. 37; and idem, *Die* Vita Aegil Abbatis Fuldensis *des Brun Candidus. Ein* Opus Geminum *aus dem Zeitalter der Anianischen Reform in Biblisch-Figuralem Hintergrundstil*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften 17 (Frankfurt am Main: 1992), 19, n. 38.

49 Eigil, *VS*, c. 13, 144.

prayers Sturm discovered the place to found a monastery. Eigil also recalled the practical side of Boniface's involvement in Fulda's initial stages; he brought construction workers to help build the convent and taught the religious men in what he thought were the basic principles of monastic life.[50]

However, Eigil's main focus was his kinsman Sturm and the part he played in Fulda's past. Eigil pushed forward his relative as Fulda's first abbot and founder and turned him into a powerful patron of the monastery and a symbol of its communal identity. It was with Sturm that Fulda began – he longed to set up a monastery for himself, he discovered the place where Fulda was founded, and he travelled to Italy to learn first-hand the way of life instituted by Benedict of Nursia so he could train his own monks in the same tradition.[51] By focusing on Sturm as the origin of the Fulda community Eigil was elaborating on existing traditions: it is the same starting point that lies at the basis of the *Annales necrologici* and comes to the fore as one of the ordering principles of the *Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi*, which structured Fulda's past in connection to the anniversary of Sturm's day of death.

Once abbot, Eigil continued this policy of promoting Sturm as Fulda's founder. He moved Sturm's anniversary (which was probably observed right before Christmas) on Fulda's liturgical calendar to let it coincide with the feast of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and martyr, celebrated in Fulda on 17 December.[52] To merge Sturm's anniversary with the feast of an acknowledged saint was possibly an attempt to prevent Sturm's commemoration from being overshadowed by the festivities of Christmas and to boost his veneration. In addition, Eigil extended the liturgical commemoration of Sturm's death with the celebration of masses, the singing of psalms, and the recitations of prayers and readings from the *Vita Sturmi* during the monks' mealtimes.[53] He also erected an altar near Sturm's grave, dedicated to saints from Bavaria, the region of Sturm's birth, and to Sturm's teacher Wigbert, in addition to Ignatius.[54] Eigil also initiated a communal commemoration of all deceased members of the Fulda community on his relative's anniversary, further strengthening the link

50 Eigil, *VS*, c. 13, 144.

51 Eigil, *VS*, c. 4, 133, c. 9, 141, and c. 14, 145–46.

52 Candidus, *Vita Aegil, ed. Gereon Becht-Jördens Vita Aegil abbatis Fuldensis a Candido ad Modestum edita prosa et versibus: Ein Opus Geminum des IX. Jahrhunderts. Einleitung und kritische Edition*, (Marburg: 1994), lib. 1, c. 22, 18. We do not know the date of Sturm's death. It seems to have been later than 17 December. For the details of the argument, see Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 148.

53 Candidus, *Vita Aegil*, lib. 1, c. 22, 18.

54 Candidus, *Vita Aegil*, lib. 2, c. 19, 62.

between Sturm and the monastic community as it was expressed in the *Annales necrologici*.[55]

As Dieter Geuenich remarked, a likely reason for this focus on Sturm as Fulda's founder was that the monks had Sturm all to themselves, while they had to share Boniface with so many other communities: Utrecht, Mainz, Fritzlar, Tauberbischofsheim, Kitzingen, Ochsenfurt, Amöneburg, and Ohrdruf.[56] In addition, acknowledging and emphasizing that Fulda had been Boniface's foundation might be risky considering the claim that the archbishop of Mainz might then lay on Fulda, as he did in the 760s, when King Pippin III sent Sturm into exile because of presumed disloyalty to the court.[57] Boniface's successor in Mainz, Lull, thereupon appointed one of his own priests as abbot of Fulda with permission of the king. In the end, Pippin allowed Sturm to return to Fulda and brought the monastery under his control, but the incident shows that Fulda's juridical status was not set in stone and that the archbishop of Mainz, also because of his relative closeness to the monastery, was likely to interfere in Fulda's affairs.

Eigil's attempt to promote his kinsman as Fulda's founder was very successful. While copies of the now lost papal privilege (751) and Carloman's donation of 744 indicate Boniface as the receiver of the grants, later monastic sources, written after the composition of the *Vita Sturmi*, remember Sturm as Fulda's first abbot and founder, without any reference to Boniface's involvement. An example is the 10th-century *Gesta abbatum*. This catalogue of abbots, included in the same Fulda manuscript that holds a copy of the *Annales necrologici*, lists the contributions of Fulda's abbots to the monastery's well-being.[58] It recalls, for example, Hrabanus' famous library and the construction of Fulda's new abbey church under Ratger, and displays a special interest in liturgical objects. It starts with the year of Fulda's foundation, 744, and the abbacy of Sturm, who is remembered as "primus pater et fundator Fuldensis coenobii" ("first father and founder of the monastery of Fulda"). Boniface is mentioned with regard to his translation in 819 and the decoration of his grave, but his role in the foundation

55 Candidus, *Vita Aegil*, lib. 1, c. 22, 18.

56 Geuenich, "Bonifatius und 'sein' Kloster Fulda," 298. Eigil's kinship with Sturm probably also played a role.

57 Sturm's exile to Jumièges is described in the *VS*, c. 18, 152–53. It is an odd episode, which shows the difficult position of Fulda after Boniface's death and Sturm's controversial position in the community. See Patzold, "Konflikte," 76–91; Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 42–3. Mainz became an archbishopric in 785.

58 Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Hs. B 1, fols. 4r-5r; *Gesta abbatum*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH SS 13 (Hanover: 1881), 272–74.

of Fulda and the acquisition of the papal privilege are not recorded. Still, Boniface's involvement in Fulda's foundation was never completely forgotten. A 16th-century abbots' catalogue, discovered in Staatsarchiv Marburg, H 126, refers to Boniface as the initiator of Fulda's foundation and narrates that Boniface entrusted Fulda to Sturm.[59] Apparently several traditions continued to exist next to each other, with particular circumstances determining which one was brought forward.

6 Sites of Memory

The promotion of Sturm as patron of Fulda did not alter Boniface's prominence as divine intermediary, and under Eigil his cult was further integrated into Fulda's liturgical apparatus and living space.[60] The abbot completed Fulda's new abbey church and orchestrated the dedication of the basilica and the translation of Boniface's body to his new resting place, a major project which indicated Boniface's ever-growing importance for the Fulda community and his elevated status as patron saint.[61] Boniface, moreover, became a focal point in the ordering of the physical, monastic space. Places once touched by Boniface's presence were marked by altars, and texts were written to link concrete places to the martyr's former whereabouts and his current bodily presence, and to evoke the saint's proximity. So Eigil remarked in the *Vita Sturmi* that the monks still called the hill where Boniface used to reside when visiting Fulda "Bischofsberg" by the time he composed his text.[62] In addition, the main altar of Fulda's primary abbey church, once dedicated by Boniface himself, was cherished in the late 810s by the monks as a monument to his involvement in

59 The text is edited by Josef Semmler, *Der Fuldaer Abtskatalog des Apollo von Vilbel: Zur Fuldaer Geschichtsschreibung des 16. Jahrhunderts und zur Chronologie der Fuldaer Äbte*, QAGADF 25 (Fulda: 1986), 32.

60 Gangolf Schrimpf discovered a reference in one of Fulda's library catalogues to a "vita sancti Bonifacii metrice et prosaice conscripta." This *opus geminum* is unfortunately no longer extant, so it is impossible to establish when the text was written and by whom. Gereon Becht-Jördens believes that the text was composed under Abbot Ratger. For his argumentation, see "Text, Bild und Architektur," 95–7. See also Petra Kehl, "Auf den Spuren zweier verschwollener *vitae Bonifatii* aus Fulda," *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 68 (1992), 104–06. I propose a later date, if indeed such a work existed, namely Hrabanus's abbacy. It would fit Hrabanus's policy to promote Boniface's cult (see below) and explains why Candidus did not refer to the text in his *Vita Aegil.*

61 This process had been started under Ratger who supervised the building of the western transept.

62 Eigil, *VS*, c. 13, 144: "Mons episcopi."

the erection of Fulda's abbey church.[63] When in 819 Boniface's body was moved to his new resting place in the western apse, the monks marked the place where his body used to rest with an altar, dedicated to the Holy Cross. According to the *titulus*, this altar contained relics once collected by Boniface himself.[64] The monks also placed another altar close to Boniface's new resting place in the western apse. Once again the *titulus* for the crypt below created a connection with Boniface: the column and supports of the crypt referred to in the metaphorical language of the poet were those which bore the weight of Boniface's grave above.[65]

While the altars and their precious contents served as monuments to Boniface's life and meaning for the Fulda community, it was the *tituli*, the short verses explaining the meaning of these sacred tables, that made the connection with Boniface explicit. The *tituli* created the narrative present in the altar arrangement, linking up the three main altars on the central axis of the abbey church, and positioning Boniface in relation to the history of Christianity in general. Unfortunately, we do not know in what ways these "subtitles" to the altar programme were published. Were they painted on the walls? Were they inscribed on the altars themselves or on wooden panels put up close to the altars? What is extant is a 17th-century print of a compilation of early medieval poetry – according to the editor it was copied from an "old manuscript" – which includes the compositions of Hrabanus Maurus, the author of the *tituli*. Hrabanus probably wrote them on the occasion of the dedication of the new abbey church and the translation of Boniface's remains in 819.[66] In addition, there is the *Life of Eigil*, written by Candidus in the 840s, which extensively describes the church dedication and includes the *tituli* as well.[67] It is clear that a written tradition in the monastery advertised Boniface's connection to the various parts of its physical space.

63 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 41, 206.

64 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 41, 206.

65 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 41, 208: "Hicque Columbanus fixa stat rite columna, / martyris et tumulo subsidia apta feret."

66 Regarding Hrabanus's *tituli* see Werner Meyer-Barkhausen, "Die Versinschriften (*tituli*) des Hrabanus Maurus als Bau- und Kunstgeschichtliche Quellen," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 7 (1957), 57–89.

67 Regarding the transmission of the *tituli* see Becht-Jördens, *Vita Aegil: Einleitung und Kritische Edition*, xxxiii–xxxvi; and Gereon Becht-Jördens, "Sturmi oder Bonifatius? Ein Konflikt im Zeitalter der anianischen Reform um Identität und monastisches Selbstverständnis im Spiegel der Altartituli des Hrabanus Maurus für die Salvatorbasilika zu Fulda," in *Kirche und Schrift: Hrabanus Maurus in Fulda*, eds. Marc-Aeilko Aris and Susanna Bullido del Barrio. Fuldaer Studien 13 (Frankfurt am Main: 2010), 123–87, including an edition of the *tituli*.

The *Vita Sturmi* and the *tituli* both show that the memory of Boniface was kept alive and became physically embedded into the living space of the monks. Of course the authors of these texts also contributed to this process by fixing the tradition to parchment and stone. Their creations reflected Boniface's importance for the Fulda community as much as they promoted it. The Boniface they propagated had been a real historical presence in Fulda – he had frequently visited the monastery, he had brought Fulda relics, he had dedicated (the main altar of) Fulda's first abbey church – but most importantly, he still guarded the monastery through his physical remains and heavenly patronage.

The images created by these texts functioned as filters through which the living environment was perceived. They were, however, not necessarily shared by all, nor did they dominate at all times and in all contexts. Another source, for example, contemporary to the *Vita Sturmi* and written for the community of monks living on Bischofsberg, simply names the place where Boniface resided during his visits to Fulda *mons* (mountain).[68] And by the late medieval period the name of the hill had been changed from Bischofsberg into Frauenberg. Abbot Ratger had built a church on the hill, dedicated in 809 to Mary, and future generations would call the hill *mons sanctae Mariae* or Frauenberg after the church's patron saint.[69] Remembrance is always dynamic.

7 Hrabanus Maurus: Patron of Boniface's Cult

Boniface's remembrance in Fulda shows an evolution from a historical figure involved in Fulda's foundation into a martyr saint, and indicates that different, conflicting factions within the community used Boniface's legacy to legitimize their way of life. Despite this evolution Boniface's connection to Fulda's foundation was never severed, as the *tituli* make clear. The final section of this chapter treats Boniface's legacy outside of Fulda: he was also seen as an apostle who contributed to the Christianization of Germany and whose cult was promoted outside the monastery. The personal devotion of Hrabanus Maurus to Boniface and Hrabanus's ambitions as abbot of Fulda (822–842) and archbishop of Mainz (847–856) fostered this development.

68 The phrase used is "basilica sanctae Mariae in Monte." This concerns a note written in the margin of Kassel, Hessische Landesbibliothek & Murhardische Bibliothek (Gesamthochschulbibliothek) 2° ms. astron. 2, 83v.

69 See for example references to Frauenberg in Frauenberg's *martyrologium-necrologium*, dating to the first half of the 15th century: Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek Hs. 4° D 28, edition: *FW* 1, 233–70.

Hrabanus had been closely involved in the translation of Boniface's remains in 819, as one of the bearers of the martyr's sepulchre to his new resting place. The event was undoubtedly a milestone in his career.[70] Later in life – by then he was archbishop of Mainz – Hrabanus still regarded himself as Boniface's *vernaculus*: a servant, born in the house of his master, in reference to the monastery where Boniface's body had been buried and into which Hrabanus had entered at an early age.[71] It seems likely that he was first exposed to the veneration of Boniface through his parents, who with gifts of land and the oblation of their son hoped to win the saint's favour, and who tied the fate of their family to the monastery that housed his body.[72] At Fulda the worship of Boniface was further instilled in Hrabanus. Because of the high positions he held and the range of his influence, Hrabanus had quite an impact on how Boniface was remembered inside as well as outside Fulda. Boniface, by then patron saint of the monastery, must have been special to all Fulda monks. Yet, in Hrabanus' case, the richness of the available source material makes it possible to trace how his devotion for the saint permeated both his personal life and professional career.

As abbot of Fulda (Hrabanus succeeded Eigil in 822), Hrabanus did much to further anchor Boniface's remembrance in the monastery. For example, he placed tower-shaped reliquaries behind the Holy Cross altar, where Boniface's body used to rest, and the Holy Saviour altar, once dedicated by Boniface himself.[73] At the same time the abbot also actively exported Boniface outside the mother convent. He wrote a homily for Boniface's feast in 825, as part of a collection of sermons, and asked the archbishop of Mainz to distribute the compilation.[74] He wrote a hymn in honour of the martyr which may have been sung during the liturgical festivities in Fulda and Mainz in honour of Boniface.[75] Moreover, he included Boniface in the martyrology he composed between 840 and 854 at the request of Abbot Ratleik of Seligenstadt, and which thus was intended for dissemination outside Fulda.[76] Hrabanus was also the first abbot to distribute relics of Boniface to churches outside the confines of

70 Candidus, *Vita Aegil* 2, c. 17, 59.

71 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 57, 220.

72 *UBF*, no. 38, 65–6, nos. 177 and 178, 271–73, and no. 238, 410–12.

73 Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula sanctorum in Fuldensium ecclesias translatorum*, ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 15 (Hanover: 1887) c. 3, 333, and c. 14, 339.

74 Hrabanus Maurus, *Epistolae*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. 5 (Berlin: 1898–1899), no. 6, 391; idem, *Homilia*, no. 24.

75 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 81, 234–35. The date of composition is unknown.

76 Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium*, ed. John McCulloh, CCCM 44 (Turnhout: 1979), 54 (death), 111 (relic translation), 123 (ordination), and 99 (in relation to Leoba).

the monastery, and he wrote *tituli* in honour of the saints whose relics these churches housed. He brought relics to Holzkirchen as well as to the family church in Hofheim, which held the tombs of Hrabanus' parents and which his father had bequeathed to Fulda on his deathbed in 802.[77] It was probably when Hrabanus' brother Guntram donated the family's other possessions in Hofheim to Fulda, in 834 or 836, that a relic of Boniface was brought to this church.[78]

By distributing relics, Hrabanus multiplied the possibilities for believers to access and benefit from Boniface's holy powers, starting with his own family.[79] Holzkirchen was probably more accessible for the local population than Hofheim, which seems to have consisted of nothing more than the rural estate complex once owned by the abbot's family.[80] Holzkirchen, on the other hand, was the base of Fulda's possessions in Lower Francia and a vital social centre in the region, with quite a lot of people traveling through, since it lay close to the river Aalbach, a tributary of the Main.[81] Miracle stories recording the healing power of Holzkirchen's relics suggest that masses held in the monastic church were open to the public and that monastic priests living in Holzkirchen provided the local population with pastoral care when needed.[82]

Hrabanus never explicitly stated in the *tituli* that he had arranged the transfer of Boniface's relics to these churches. His pupil Rudolf of Fulda, however, elsewhere described Hrabanus' involvement in the translation of relics of Roman martyrs to those churches and others as well. It is likely that Hrabanus used the arrival of the Roman relics to add a relic of Boniface to these sacred

77 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 49, 214, and no. 86, 238; Meyer-Barkhausen, "Versinschriften," 73–4; Konrad Lübeck, "Fuldaer Nebenklöster in Mainfranken," *Mainfrankisches Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Kunst* 2 (1950), 1–52.

78 *CDF*, no. 487, 215. Regarding the special bond between Hrabanus' family and Fulda see Hans Hummer, "A Family Cartulary of Hrabanus Maurus?: Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg, Ms. K 424," in *Nomen et Fraternitas: Festschrift für Dieter Geuenich zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Uwe Ludwig and Thomas Schilp (Berlin: 2008), 645–64.

79 Presumably also Guntram and his wife were buried there. See the epitaph that Hrabanus wrote for them, *Carmina*, no. 86, 238.

80 Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400–1000* (Cambridge: 2000), 67.

81 MGH DD Kar. 1, no. 106, 150–51; *UBF*, no. 73, 131–37; Werner Rösener, "Die Grundherrschaft des Klosters Fulda in der karolingischer und ottonischer Zeit," in *Kloster Fulda*, ed. Schrimpf, 209–24; Ulrich Weidinger, *Untersuchungen zur Wirtschaftsstruktur des Klosters Fulda in der Karolingerzeit*, Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 36 (Stuttgart: 1991), 137.

82 Rudolf, *Miracula sanctorum*, c. 12, 338. See also Raaijmakers, *Fulda*, 223, 292–94, for further references and arguments.

treasures.[83] Moreover, we know, on the basis of this very same source, the *Miracula sanctorum in Fuldensium ecclesias translatorum*, that Hrabanus had orchestrated the translation of Leoba's body to the church on the nearby Ugesberg in 838.[84] Leoba was a relative of Boniface who had followed her kinsman to the Continent to join his mission and who, on Boniface's explicit wish, had been buried in Fulda's abbey church.[85] Among the abbot's reasons to move Leoba's body (in spite of Boniface's request) was probably her popularity among female pilgrims, whose presence threatened the integrity of Fulda's *claustrum*. He also wished to further stimulate her cult through the act of translation.[86] In other words, the distribution of Boniface's relics fits into a larger pattern of re-arrangement of Fulda's holy treasures and the creation of a sacred network under Hrabanus' supervision, in which Boniface and his inner circle held a special place. Hrabanus was also indirectly involved in the composition of Leoba's biography, and the creation of two other *vitae* dedicated to other followers of Boniface, namely Wigbert, abbot of Boniface's foundation at Fritzlar, and Sola, an Anglo-Saxon recluse and founder of Fulda's dependency in Solnhofen.[87] The occasion to write the latter text was the translation of Sola's remains in 838–839 under supervision of Hrabanus's nephew, who was named Guntram just like his father.[88]

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83 Rudolf, *Miracula sanctorum*, 328–41.

84 Idem, c. 14, 339. For a summary of the discussion about the year in which the dedication of the church and the translation of Leoba's remains took place – 836 or 838 – see Hilde Claussen, "Eine Reliquiennische in der Krypta auf dem Petersberg bei Fulda," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 21 (1987), 245–73, n. 8.

85 Much has been written on Leoba. I here refer only to Stefan Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius: Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte 79 (Mainz: 1996), 102–04; and Gisela Muschiol, "Königshof, Kloster und Mission: Die Welt der Lioba und ihre geistlichen Schwestern," *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Franz J. Felten (Wiesbaden: 2004), 99–114.

86 Hrabanus refered to Leoba's miracle-working power in his *Martyrologium*, 99; Rudolf, *Vita Leobae*, c. 22–3, 130–31.

87 Lupus of Ferrières composed the *Vita Wigberti* during his stay in Fulda in the 830s. *Vita Wigberti abbatis Friteslariensis*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15 (Hanover: 1887), 36–43. Ermanrich of Ellwangen, a pupil of Hrabanus and Rudolf of Fulda, wrote the *Vita Sualonis,* ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover: 1887), 151–63.

88 Ermanrich of Ellwangen, *Vita Sualonis*, 154 and 155, and c. 10, 161–62. Possibly the production and distribution of copies of the so-called *Codices Bonifatiani* in the 9th century can also be considered an attempt to promote Boniface's cult. According to Ulrich Schmid these copies of the books which were believed to have been once part of Boniface's personal book collection were considered as contact relics: Unum ex quattuor: *Eine Geschichte der lateinischen Tatianüberlieferung* (Freiburg: 2005), 96–8, 220–25. I am not sure if this

The Boniface promoted by Hrabanus took different shapes. He was a martyr, monk, and missionary, and later, by the time Hrabanus had become archbishop himself, also a bishop. Many of the *tituli* focus on Boniface as an intermediary who through his martyrdom had gained access to the heavenly community of saints. The sermon presents Boniface as an incarnation of the beatitudes of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Hrabanus wrote the sermon initially for the Fulda monks but later included it in the sermon collection, which he compiled for Archbishop Haistulf of Mainz between 822 and 826. In it Hrabanus urged the monks to follow in Boniface's footsteps and persevere in the hard but virtuous way of monastic life: "Let us, who are his disciples, imitate his progression to our ability; let us follow his advice and thus, with God's help, achieve his reward."[89] The hymn, which Hrabanus composed for Boniface's feast day, ranks Boniface with the great missionaries of the Christian past. Just as Asia holds Jacob in high esteem, Hrabanus wrote, and just as Italy pays tribute to Peter, Ephesus has John and Africa has Cyprian, so too Germania honours its own missionary – Boniface – who through his preaching and martyrdom granted the Frisians, the Saxons, and the Franks the possibility of eternal life.[90]

While earlier sources from Fulda, discussed in the first part of this article, do not attach much weight to Boniface's role as missionary, this aspect of Boniface's career gained new prominence in the representation of the saint under Hrabanus. This becomes clear from the hymn, but also from the earlier mentioned *vitae* of Boniface's disciples, produced in or in relation to Fulda in the 830s, in which Boniface is remembered for his contribution to the spread of Christianity in Germania, Francia, and Alemannia.[91] Ermanrich of Ellwangen, the author of the *Vita Sualonis*, did not call Boniface "the apostle of Germany" outright, but did state that due to the continuous efforts of Boniface and his associates to preach the Gospel, it was as if the apostles themselves were present.[92] Perhaps Hrabanus was influenced by traditions from Utrecht and Dokkum, where the remembrance of Boniface as a missionary was deeply embedded, although there are also some differences. Hrabanus compared Boniface to Peter and not

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is true, but it is safe to say that Boniface's books were held in high esteem as authoritative sources of knowledge, because they had once been used by Boniface himself.

89 Hrabanus Maurus, *Homilia*, no. 24, 49B: "Imitemur nos, qui alumni eius sumus, pro modulo nostro, profectum eius; sequamur monita illius, et sic, Deo opitulante, perveniemus ad praemium eius."

90 Hrabanus Maurus, *Carmina*, no. 81, 234.

91 Rudolf of Fulda, *Vita Leobae*, c. 9, 125; Ermanrich of Ellwangen, *Vita Sualonis*, c. 1, 157. Lupus of Ferrières' *Vita Wigberti*, on the other hand, highlights Boniface's role as founder of religious communities; *Vita Wigberti*, c. 3, 39.

92 Ermanrich of Ellwangen, *Vita Sualonis*, c. 1, 157.

Paul, the apostle whose Epistles are quoted throughout the *Vita Bonifatii*, produced in Mainz, and were a source of inspiration for Alcuin's *titulus* for the church in Dokkum as well as Liudger's *Life of Gregory*.[93] The image of a missionary continued to be used in Fulda's representations of Boniface; the *Martyrologium Fuldense*, composed in Fulda around 900, remembers Boniface as an apostle who taught God's word to whole of Germania, and it is in his role as missionary, besides that of martyr, that Boniface is visualised in the beautiful illuminations of Fulda's 10th- and 11th-century sacramentaries.[94]

As a skilful preacher, sensitive to human diversity and aware that each audience should be approached differently, Hrabanus brought to the fore the aspect of Boniface's identity that best fitted the context in which he wrote. And although Boniface and Fulda were closely connected for Hrabanus, he showed Boniface's significance for all Christians of Germania, not just the Fulda monks. This shift was probably inspired by his responsibilities as abbot and, since 847, archbishop.[95] The Boniface evoked by Hrabanus was not remembered for his human peculiarities and his *instituta*; he had become an idealized type of saint to be admired and imitated. Because of his heavenly status, this Boniface stood remote from the Christians who worshipped him and sought his support.

Interestingly, Sturm is not mentioned in any of Hrabanus' works – neither his martyrology, his verses, nor his sermons. But there is no reason to doubt that Hrabanus continued the liturgical celebrations initiated by his predecessor Eigil. These further anchored Sturm in Fulda's perception of the monastery's origin. Abbot lists dating from the late 9th up to the 12th century

93 Alcuin, *Carmina*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Poet. lat. 1 (Berlin, 1881), no. 86, 304; Altfrid, *VLger*, lib. 1, c. 20, 24. Kehl, *Kult*, 76–7, 134–49; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 100–12; Hans Ulrich Rudolf, *Apostoli gentium: Studien zum Apostelepitheton unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Winfried-Bonifatius und seiner Apostelbeinamen* (Stuttgart: 1971), 148–56.

94 Rome, BAV, Cod. Vat. Reg. lat. 441 (with references to Boniface on fols. 58, 59, 70 and 72). Edited as *Martyrologium historicum Fuldense*, ed. Dominicus Georgius, in *Martyrologium Adonis archiepiscopi Viennensis* (Rome: 1745), 656–75. Wilhelm Levison edited those parts relating to Boniface in MGH SRG 57 (Hanover and Leipzig: 1905), 59–61. The sacramentaries concerned are Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, MS Lit. 1, fol. 126v; Udine, Biblioteca Capitolare, fol. 42v; Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Theol. 231, fol. 82r, with reproductions and an analysis in Eric Palazzo, *Les sacramentaires de Fulda: Étude sur l'iconographie et la liturgie à l'époque Ottonienne*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 77 (Münster: 1994), 86–9 (illustrations 15, 42 and 115).

95 As archbishop Hrabanus continued to promote the cult of Boniface. See for an overview of the distribution of Boniface's relics: Petra Kehl's chapter in this volume and *Kult*, 174–85; Mechtild Schulze-Dörrlamm, "Das steinerne Monument des Hrabanus Maurus auf dem Reliquiengrab des Hl. Bonifatius (†754) in Mainz," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 51, no. 1 (2004), 281–347.

IMAGE 16.1 Frontispiece of volume II of the *Codex Eberhardi*. Marburg, Staatsarchiv, Hs. K. 426, vol. II, fol. 6r, ca. 1160s

all start with Sturm, and in imitation of Eigil's *Vita Sturmi*, which is as much a foundation history as a biography of Sturm, they refer to him as "primus pater et fundator."[96] Because Sturm's remembrance was so closely interwoven with the commemoration of the deceased monks and the abbots who had succeeded him, it seems that Sturm remained much more a symbol of their identity as a monastic community than Boniface, Fulda's patron saint.[97]

The multifaceted commemorative tradition of Boniface in Fulda, always in connection, and in competition, with that of Sturm, is beautifully illustrated by the *Codex Eberhardi*, which elaborates on several of the images mentioned above. This two-volume codex, listing Fulda's rights and property, was made in the 1160s by the monk Eberhard not as a practical book of reference, but as a tribute to the monastery's glorious past and as evidence for the sacredness of the place.[98] Eberhard referred to Boniface as the martyr saint who was first and foremost Fulda's patron (*patronus noster*), but who at the same time was "the apostle and preacher of all churches in Gaul, Alemannia, and Germania" (*omnium ęcclesiarum Gallię Alamannię et Germanię apostolus et predicator*).[99] Eberhard depicted Boniface as a bishop in the frontispiece of the second volume, reproducing the episcopal vestments in close detail. The image represents the underlying ideal of Eberhard's work, and it is revealing that Boniface does not represent Fulda on his own, but is accompanied by Sturm, dressed in the simple habit of a monk. Both Boniface and Sturm are at the centre of the frontispiece offering Fulda's possessions to Christ who is depicted at the top, while Eberhard, drawn in the same colours as the ornamental edge so as not to distract attention from the three central figures, kneels at Boniface's feet. The accompanying text in the decorative border labels Boniface as *sacer* ("Behold the holy Boniface …"), and he is the heavenly intermediary to whom Eberhard

96 *FW* 1, 214–15.

97 See the history of the manuscript transmission of the *Vita Sturmi*, described by Petrus Engelbert in his critical edition of the text. Regarding Sturm's cult in Fulda, and in Paderborn and Würzburg, see Engelbert's "Exkurs: Zur kultischen Verehrung Sturms," *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigils von Fulda*, 112.

98 See the edition of Heinrich Meyer zum Ermgassen who convincingly has shown that Eberhard never intended to be an archivist in the modern sense of the word. *Der Codex Eberhardi des Klosters Fulda,* 4 vols., Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen 58 (Elwert/Marburg: 1995/1996, 2009). A digital copy of the manuscript is now available at https://arcinsys.hessen.de/arcinsys/detailAction.action?detailid=v782853.

99 Marburg, Staatsarchiv, Hs. K. 426, fol. 162, which is page 331 of the digitalised copy, HStAM Bestand K Nr. 426. Eberhard emphasised Boniface's role in the mission to justify Fulda's claim to tithes in areas which Boniface had converted to Christianity according to Eberhard. See also Kehl, *Kult*, 122–23, and Rudolf, *Apostoli gentium*, 148, who believes that the references to Boniface as apostle were a 12th-century interpolation.

addresses his prayer, but it is Sturm who is named *pater almus* ("… and Sturm, the kind father"), as one of their own.[100]

To conclude, the remembrance of Boniface at Fulda is complex because so many interested parties were involved, each with their own agenda. Boniface had set up Fulda, but not on his own. He was founder of Fulda, but also initiator of other religious communities, and, moreover, had been bishop of Mainz and legate of Rome. After Boniface's death his heirs struggled over his legacy and laid a claim to whatever aspect of Boniface's earthly career and heavenly status suited their own ambitions best: the martyr's physical remains, the master's teaching, the bishop's legal authority, his mandate as apostolic legate, his agency as patron saint. They created multiple images of Boniface, and thereby contributed to his continuous appeal as a source of authority and as a reference point in creating a sense of community and meaning.

Boniface is still the patron saint of Fulda, which is a bishopric today. In 2004, on the 1250th anniversary of Boniface's *dies natalis*, thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe travelled to Fulda to venerate the saint, who on this occasion was mostly remembered as the apostle of Germany. Although there are no longer Donar Oaks in Germany to cut down, so Cardinal Kasper lectured the faithful, mission is still highly relevant, and Boniface had set the example that Christians today needed to follow by unremittingly preaching the Gospels. Sturm, whose skull was carried directly behind Boniface's relics in the celebratory procession on the eve of Boniface's feast, was honoured as Fulda's first abbot, who had brought Fulda Boniface's relics, and who, moreover, represented the beginning of Fulda's existence. The familiar narrative was adapted to meet modern needs: Boniface and Sturm are present again, but now flanked by Leoba, Boniface's cousin, who was evoked as Boniface's helper, "die Apostelin Deutschlands."[101]

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100 Marburg, Staatsarchiv, Hs. K. 426, vol. II, fol. 6r. Sturm had been recently canonized by Pope Innocentius II, in 1139. Engelbert, "Exkurs," 112.

101 The letter that Pope John Paul II sent on this occasion to the Bishop of Fulda can be found at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2004/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20040607_san-bonifacio.html. For a description of the activities, with further references to newspaper articles about the festivities, see Raaijmakers, "In de voetsporen van Bonifatius: Dokkum-Mainz-Fulda in de zomer van 2004," *Madoc* 18, no. 1 (2004), 242–47. Accessible through https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_mad001200401_01/_mad001200401_01_0033.php#276.

CHAPTER 17

Boniface as Political Saint in Germany in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Siegfried Weichlein

1 Introduction

The ways Boniface has been remembered in Germany over the centuries have closely mirrored changes in German society and politics.[1] During the 19th and the 20th centuries the figure of Saint Boniface was used as a powerful tool to refocus and rebrand Catholicism, as the Church shifted its relationship with society at large as well as its orientation toward the papacy in Rome. The cult as well as the historiography of Boniface reflected the religious and political history of the times. The Boniface of the Enlightenment looked like a preacher of Enlightenment moral values. For those living in the nationalist age after 1815, Boniface was seen as bringing unity to the Germanic peoples and founding the German nation. The Boniface of 1848 was viewed as fighting on the side of the counter-revolution. He embodied the alignment of church and state against liberal efforts for a constitutional nation-state. After 1871 Boniface was seen to provide a Catholic version of the origins of the German nation. The Boniface of the 20th century reflected a reinvigorated Catholicism after the demise of the Protestant Hohenzollern monarchy in 1918. During the Cold War, Catholics saw Boniface as the Apostle of (Western) Europe, a founding figure of the Carolingian empire from the Pyrenees to the Elbe, which also happened to be the borders of the European Economic Community founded by the Roman Treaties in 1957.

1 Siegfried Weichlein, "Religion und Nation: Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 100 (2006), 45–58; Weichlein, "Die Bonifatiustradition im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsächsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen. Katalog zur Ausstellung*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Fulda: 2004), 67–82; Weichlein, "Der Apostel der Deutschen: Die konfessionspolitische Konstruktion des Bonifatius im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Konfessionen im Konflikt. Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1970: Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter*, ed. Olaf Blaschke (Göttingen: 2002), 155–79. See also Ludwig Lenhart, "Die Bonifatius-Renaissance des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag*, eds. Stephan Hilpisch et al. (Fulda: 1954), 533–85.

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These changing images of Boniface had continuities and contradictions. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, perceptions of Boniface followed a narrative of the German nation. Contradictions arose from the changing relationship between the Christian churches in that narrative. While Boniface was counted as a Christian saint holy to both Catholics and Protestants since he fought paganism, he could also be figured as guaranteeing the unity Catholic of Christianity. In that sense, however, he was set against Luther and the Protestant Reformation, in a narrative that portrayed Luther as a schismatic. These multilayered and conflicting images of Boniface could be and often were used polemically by both Catholics and Protestants.

2 Boniface during the Enlightenment and Romanticism

The Boniface commemorated in the early 1800s was a vastly different figure from the saint commemorated in 1855 and 1954 at the 1100th and 1200th anniversaries of his death. Successive revolutions altered the relationship between the Christian churches as well as between the churches and the state, and greatly affected the ways in which Boniface was remembered and how he was presented. Around 1800 Boniface was venerated by Lutherans as well as by Catholics. For example, in 1812, the Protestant General Superintendent Josias Friedrich Christian Löffler stood alongside a Catholic priest and a Reformed preacher to commemorate the construction of the first church dedicated by Boniface, near Altenburg in Thuringia in 724.[2]

Boniface's preaching of monotheism to the Germanic peoples in the 8th century was of historical importance to conservative Catholics in the age of the French Revolution, who portrayed the revolutionaries as pagans and themselves as the standard bearers of true faith. The story of Boniface's felling of the Donar Oak served as a central reference point in the popular understanding of the Christian victory over paganism and Germanic mythology.[3] This line of interpretation made Boniface the hero of anti-revolutionary Christianity, since conservatives in both churches actively opposed the secularist philosophy of

2 Josias Friedrich Christian Löffler, *Bonifacius, oder Feyer des Andenkens an die erste christliche Kirche in Thüringen, bey Altenburga im Herzogtum Gotha* (Gotha: 1812).

3 This was a common topic in religious paintings and etchings. See Bernhard Rode, "Bonifacius haut in Hessen einen Opferbaum um," 1781, pencil drawing, 47.7 x 36.5 cm. Vienna, Albertina Museum; see https://www.graphikportal.org/document/gp0000089353. Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, "Bonifatius fällt die Donareiche," after 1780, pencil drawing. Fulda, Vonderau Museum.

the French Revolution, which they interpreted as paganism. For them, Boniface was the quintessential monotheist opposing revolutionary secularism. Boniface could – to a certain extent – be brought in line with a version of Christianity that saw the point of missionary activity as bringing morals to an immoral community. The intellectual and political environment of the late 18th and early 19th century also offered this narrative of Boniface as a moral teacher: well into the 1840s, Boniface was seen as an example of personal virtues. Bishop Pfaff from Fulda praised Boniface as late as 1842 for being "true and charitable," humble, constant in self-denial, and full of pure love for God and all human beings.[4] In sum: Boniface was used in both Protestant and Catholic churches and for various purposes: he could be seen both as a monotheistic preacher against revolutionary secularism and as a moralizing apostle against the perceived immorality of the time.

To modern readers this may sound rather self-evident, but it was not, considering that his relationship to Rome was such an important pillar of Boniface's work. This moralizing reading of Boniface set him apart from other political/mythological characters in early German nationalism, particularly from Arminius, who had a very different relationship to Rome. Arminius had been a Cheruskian nobleman and warrior who served in the Roman army and finally defeated three Roman legions under Varus in the Teutoburger Wald in 9 A.D. Tacitus had portrayed him as the liberator of Germania, and in the German nationalist mythology of the 19th century he stood for anti-Roman nationalism, turning Germany not only away from the Imperial Rome of ancient history, but also from the Catholic Rome of the popes. Liberals used the image of Arminius to criticize the medieval emperors for ruling over territories south of the Alps and for pursuing continuity with the Roman Empire. Arminius was particularly heralded by Protestant nationalists, for whom he served as the liberator of Germania from the pope's rule.[5] Whereas in the Arminius saga everything reminiscent of Rome was interpreted as standing for undeserved glory, rampant self-interest, and unchecked power, Boniface appeared to represent the opposite: the Roman envoy and Rome itself stood for high personal morality and selflessness. For the Catholic opponents of early German

4 Johann Leonhard Pfaff, "Predigt zur Einweihung des Fuldaer Bonifatiusdenkmales am 17.8.1842," *Katholische Sonntagsblätter*, 10 February 1842.

5 Anonymous, "Das Denkmal des Arminius," *Historisch-politische Blätter* 3 (1839), 220–33; Andreas Dörner, *Politischer Mythos und symbolische Politik: Der Hermannmythos. Zur Entstehung des Nationalbewußtseins der Deutschen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1996); Matthias Klug, *Rückwendung zum Mittelalter? Geschichtsbilder und historische Argumentation im politischen Katholizismus des Vormärz* (Paderborn: 1995), 313–19.

nationalism, Boniface was a saint who brought the light of Christianity to the morally corrupt Germanic tribes.[6]

Because the German Catholic Church was not so strongly tied to the Roman papacy in the mid-19th century, Boniface was seen less as a harbinger of Rome than as a Christian role model that everyone could follow, and this somewhat weakened his importance. As late as 1834, Bishop Pfaff of Fulda abolished the special feast day for St Boniface: Catholics had to work that day and celebrated Boniface the next Sunday. This contrasted greatly with the piety of the 18th century, which had embraced a variety of special feast days and pilgrimages for expressing the peoples' devotion to and veneration of Boniface. Pilgrimages and feast days were only loosely controlled by the Church and were thus seen as an authentic expression of popular piety. In contrast, 19th century piety was more closely governed by the Church and had essentially come under the control of the clergy. One of the consequences of this change was that in the early 19th century popular feasts as well as the thousands of pilgrimages were seen rather as a threat to Christian morality and were abolished or put under strict ecclesiastic control. Pilgrimages and feast days came to be seen as examples of idleness, in conflict with the moral values of the day which favored industriousness and productivity. For this reason, the Catholic Church of the 19th century restricted the number of pilgrimages and insisted that lay persons make their pilgrimages under the leadership of a priest.[7]

Dozens of biographies of Boniface from the first half of the 19th century show the influence of similar currents of thought among all denominations.[8] The interest in Boniface was not restricted to Catholics: Boniface still appealed to both churches. These biographies were written for a broad audience, and abbreviated versions were published for younger readers.[9] The biographies of

6 Johann Leonhard Pfaff, *Bischöfliche Anrede gehalten am 17. August 1842 bei der feierlichen Einweihung des dem heil. Bonifacius, Apostel der Deutschen, Erzbischof und Märtyrer, in der Stadt Fulda errichteten Denkmals* (Fulda: 1842). See also the anonymously published collection of songs and poems commemorating the erection of Boniface's statue in Fulda in *Das Monument des heiligen Bonifazius und dessen feierliche Enthüllung* (Fulda: 1842).

7 For the regulation of pilgrimages, see the *Wallfahrts-Verordnung der kurhessischen Regierung* from 29. March 1822 discussed in Weichlein, "Die Bonifatiustradition," 70.

8 Rudolf Schieffer, "Bonifatius-Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 363–73.

9 Cf. Löffler, *Bonifacius, oder Feyer des Andenkens*; Franz Werner, "Der Hl. Bonifacius. Germaniens Apostel," in *Der Dom von Mainz und seine Denkmäler nebst einer Darstellung der Schicksale der Stadt, und der Geschichte seiner Erzbischöfe bis zur Translation des erzbischöflichen Sitzes nach Regensburg*, ed. Franz Werner, vol. 1 (Mainz: 1827), 383–424; Moritz Schmerbauch, *Bonifacius der Heilige, Apostel der Teutschen: Nach seinem Charakter und Wirken dargestellt* (Erfurt: 1827); Moritz Schmerbauch, *Bonifatius, der heilige Apostel der Deutschen,*

Schmerbauch and Werner showed Boniface as a preacher of virtues and a role model; the story was emotional and centered on the warmth and goodness of his character. They presented religion as benevolent and uplifting for the entire nation, not as a divisive set of ideas. Narratives of Boniface sought to embolden the listeners and readers; the Boniface of the early 19th century was in tune with conservative Romanticism.[10] One such narrative was written by Johann Christoph Anton Seiters, a theologian and teacher from Göttingen, in a 578 page-long biography of Boniface in 1845. He did not portray his hero in national terms, but rather as someone who prepared the area for later developments and in his mission relied on the foundational work done (and churches founded) by Iro-Scottish missionaries a century before. His Boniface did not lead the German peoples into a new age of Christianity while totally replacing the Iro-Scottish churches, nor did he found Germany.[11] This Boniface's appeal coincided with a strong interest in the Middle Ages, which were seen as having a unified Christianity. While this Romantic-era version of Boniface could easily

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mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte des heiligen Kilianus, Ruprechts, des Abtes Lullus und anderer Mitarbeiter (Fulda: 1829); Anonymous, *Der heilige Bonifacius, Apostel von Deutschland: Für die Jugend bearbeitet* (Koblenz: 1832); Johann Christoph Anton Seiters, *Bonifacius. Der Apostel der Deutschen: Nach seinem Leben und Wirken geschildert* (Mainz: 1845); Anonymous, *Das Leben des Heiligen Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen. In niederdeutscher Sprache nach einer Handschrift aus dem 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. J.H. Schulte (Warendorf-Münster: 1852); Luitpold Brunner, *Das Leben des deutschen Apostels Bonifacius: Zugleich Erklärung der Bilder über die Geschichte dieses Heiligen in der Basilika in München* (Regensburg: 1852); Franz Heinrich Reinerding, *Der heilige Bonifatius als Apostel der Deutschen mit Bezugnahme auf sein Verhältnis zu Fulda bei Gelegenheit der elften Säkularfeier seines glorreichen Martertodes vom 5. bis 12. Juni 1855 an seinem Grabe zu Fulda* (Würzburg: 1855); Franz Heinrich Reinerding, *Kurze Lebensgeschichte des heiligen Bonifacius, Apostels der Deutschen* (Würzburg: 1855); Anonymous, *Leben und Wirken des heiligen Bonifacius: Apostel der Deutschen und erster Erzbischof von Mainz. Zur Feier seines 1100jährigen Gedächtnisfestes zu Mainz am 14.-21. Juni 1855* (Mainz: 1855); E.J. Diest Lorgion, *Bonifacius* (Groningen: 1855); J.A. Zimmermann, *Der heilige Bonifazius, Apostel Deutschlands* (Einsiedeln: 1872); Otto Fischer, *Bonifatius, der Apostel der Deutschen: Nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Leipzig: 1881); Bernhard Kuhlmann, *Der heilige Bonifacius, Apostel der Deutschen* (Paderborn: 1895); Hubert Schmetz, *St. Bonifacius: Deutschlands ruhmreicher Apostel und großer Lehrer, der erfolgreiche Förderer deutscher Einheit* (Einsiedeln-Cologne: 1899); August Werner, *Bonifatius, genannt der Apostel der Deutschen* (Barmen: 1887); Georg Pfahler, *St. Bonifacius und seine Zeit* (Regensburg: 1880).

10 See Franz Werner, "Der Hl. Bonifacius: Germaniens Apostel," in *Der Dom von Mainz und seine Denkmäler nebst einer Darstellung der Schicksale der Stadt, und der Geschichte seiner Erzbischöfe bis zur Translation des erzbischöflichen Sitzes nach Regensburg*, vol. 1 (Mainz: 1827), 383–424; Johann Leonhard Pfaff, *Leben und Wirken Winfried-Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen. Besungen von Johann Leonhard Pfaff, dermalen Bischof von Fulda, nebst dessen zwei ersteren Hirtenbriefen. Zum Druck befördert von Joseph Siegl* (Coblenz: 1834).

11 Seiters, *Bonifacius, der Apostel der Deutschen.*

be used to stir up religious emotions, he was no religious warrior against paganism. He was a soothing preacher full of warmth, a moral exemplar rather than a potentially divisive national figure.

An essential and compelling element of Romanticism as a movement was its investment in mythic pasts and its obsession with great actors, empires, and churches. These preoccupations were also made to serve the Catholic cause, despite the fact that no meaningful and self-assured Catholic community, let alone a unified German Catholicism, existed in Germany at the time. Whereas Protestant German nationalism was built around historical key figures such as Martin Luther or Gustav Adolph, Catholic Germany had a rather diffuse mythic landscape. Prussian Protestants were unified early, in 1817, into the "Altprotestantische Union," and with every major university having a largely Protestant theology faculty, in the early decades of the 19th century the Protestant bourgeoisie was becoming the backbone of German nationalism.

The Catholic map of Germany looked quite different and far from unified. In the 18th century there were a number of Catholic territories, bishoprics, archbishoprics, among them Cologne, Mainz, and Trier. Since Catholic bishoprics and abbeys were propertied, they had neither desire nor need for a common organization, political world view, or even a representation vis-à-vis other states. That changed in 1803, when secularization did away with the propertied churches and ecclesiastical territories. Compared to the organized Protestants, who were well-represented politically in the modern state, Catholicism lacked energetic political representation. Protestant entities were larger and better organized and had developed in sync with the rise of the modern state. In comparison, the Catholic churches in the German Confederation after the Congress of Vienna were in disarray. Several concordats between the German states and the Holy See established new bishoprics and a new territorial organization of the Catholic Church, but still there was little the various Catholic bishoprics had in common besides being Catholic.[12] The new bishoprics – like Fulda – were initially occupied with establishing a new order of parish life and new relationships with political authorities. Before 1803 the propertied bishops had been important political players in the old Reich and had no inclination whatsoever to forge a sense of common interest between the bishoprics of

12 Erwin Gatz et al., *Die Bistümer der deutschsprachigen Länder von der Säkularisation bis zur Gegenwart* [*ein historisches Lexikon*] (Freiburg: 2005); Dagobert Vonderau, *Die Geschichte der Seelsorge im Bistum Fulda zwischen Säkularisation* (*1803*) *und Preußenkonkordat* (*1929*) (Frankfurt am Main: 2001); Helmut Jäger, *"Wohl tobet um die Mauern der Sturm in wilder Wut …": Das Bistum Osnabrück zwischen Säkularisation und Modernisierung 1802–1858* (Osnabrück: 2007).

Cologne and of Mainz, for example, since the archbishop of Cologne was a major political force, eager to maintain that position against his Catholic counterpart in Mainz as well as against others. This sense of difference, of independence, rivalry, and local interest among the churches and dioceses, remained part of Catholic identity in Germany long after 1803. Prayer books, feast days, pilgrimages, clerical education, and other elements of religious life and education varied from one newly established diocese to the other. As a consequence, neither Prussian nor Bavarian Catholics had common representation vis-à-vis the government. Prussian and Bavarian Catholics had no shared histories, saints, liturgies, or spiritual life. Until the arrival of Rome-centered ultramontanism (Rome being *ultra montes*, over the mountains) around 1848, church life in the German lands was decentralized and marked by distinct, local church traditions that dated back centuries. Some areas, like Constance and Breslau, were more open to the Enlightenment, whereas others, like Münster and Mainz, distanced themselves from the new ideas.[13]

The cult of Boniface as a unifying figure was meant to fill that gap. Stories of Boniface appealed to a mythical past and a common origin of the German Catholic churches going back to the 8th century. A revered, heavily mythologized founder like Boniface stood for common interest and a sense of community among German Catholics and enabled a conception of one Catholic Church in the German lands, both spiritually and politically. By appealing to a shared past, Catholics tried to establish spiritual links between a variety of local and regional Catholic traditions and institutions in the German Confederation.

3 Boniface in the Age of Nationalism

Boniface and his Roman mission to the Germanic tribes came to be used as an argument in the debate over what Germany is and when Germans came into being. The Napoleonic occupation of the German states had given rise to a strong nationalist movement that from the beginning was anti-French and anti-absolutist, pitting nationalist organisations against the Catholic and semi-absolutist Habsburg empire in Vienna. This did not imply that all Catholic

13 Joachim Köhler, *Bistum Breslau Bd. 3 Neuzeit. 1740–1945* (Kehl: 1997); Michael Klöcker, "'Rheinisch-katholisch': Zur Mentalität des rheinischen Katholizismus seit der Aufklärung," *Römische Quartalschrift für Christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 100 (2005), 288–312; Andreas Holzem, "Bedingungen und Formen religiöser Erfahrung im Katholizismus zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Aufklärung," in *"Erfahrung" als Kategorie der Frühneuzeitgeschichte,* ed. Paul Münch (Munich: 2001), 317–32.

authors automatically came to the defense of the house of Habsburg: some Catholics were part of anti-nationalist conservatism and defended the absolute monarchy. But for Catholic nationalists, Boniface still played a considerable role.

In the decade before 1848 a decidedly Catholic narrative of the nation began to gain traction. Catholic nationalism sought to spell out the Catholic origins of the German nation which, they argued, had come into existence through the influence of Boniface and other missionaries seen as acting on behalf of the Roman papacy and not against it. The Insular missionaries of the 7th and 8th century and their Continental protégés were viewed by Catholic authors as the creators of Germany, rather than figures such as Luther or Arminius who had been mythologized as founders by the Protestants. Already in 1825 Catholics in Würzburg celebrated St Kilian, the Irish missionary who worked in Franconia, but Kilian's historical personality and achievements only pertained to that particular region.[14] Of all these missionaries (including Kilian, Totnan, Columbanus, Liborius, and Liudger), Boniface was the only one with a somewhat supra-regional scope, and he had held the title of the "Apostle of the Germans" or "Apostle of the Fatherland" for a long time. The legacy of Boniface was strong in regions where he had been active, in places where he had founded churches, monasteries, and dioceses, or where he had been bishop. Such notable Bonifatian locations included Paderborn, Fulda, and especially Mainz, where the archbishops of Mainz saw themselves as successors of Boniface.[15]

Starting around the Revolution of 1848, some Catholic authors used Boniface to paint a picture of religious and cultural unity in the past, in a direct contrast to the social and religious fracturing of the present. This argument

14 Franz Oberthür, *Die Feier des, dem Andenken des heiligen Kilians und seiner Gehülfen gewidmeten achten Tages des Julius: Das eigentliche National-Fest der Franken; historisch und ästhetisch dargestellt* (Würzburg: 1825).

15 For discussions of various sites associated with the veneration of Boniface in this period, see Peter Bruder, "Kirchen, Kapellen, Altäre, Stifte und sonstige Einrichtungen zu Ehren und unter dem Namen und Schutz des hl. Bonifatius," *Katholischer Seelsorger* 18 (1906), 114–21 (for a discussion of Fulda), 222–27 (Mainz), 279–83 (Limburg, Trier, Köln, Holland, Osnabrück, Hildesheim, Breslau, Münster), 324–28 (Paderborn), 371–76 (Bonifatius-Basilika in München), 410–15 (other parts of Germany, Thuringia and North Germany); Peter Bruder, "Die liturgische Verehrung des hl. Bonifatius in der Diözese Mainz," *Der Katholik* 85 (1905), vol. I, 241–63, 334–48, vol. II, 16–46; Regina Burckhardt, "Die Kirche St. Bonifaz als Denkmal und Mausoleum," in *"Vorwärts, vorwärts sollst Du schauen …": Geschichte, Politik und Kunst unter Ludwig I*, eds. Johannes Erichsen and Uwe Puschner, vol. 9 (Munich: 1986), 455–68; Ludwig Lenhart, "Die Bonifatius-Renaissance des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Sankt Bonifatius: Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda: 1954), 533–85.

was decidedly anti-Protestant, since it was used to undercut the link between Luther and the German nation.[16] The Boniface biography of 1855 of Franz Heinrich Reinerding, a Fulda cleric close to bishop Christoph Florentius Kött, made this argument, which was quite different from earlier biographies: the papacy stood center stage in his book, and Kött frequently polemicized against the "enemies of the Holy See" who did not recognize Rome as the supreme authority.[17]

Protestant and liberal authors, on the other hand, argued that Rome stood for all kinds of oppression, be it foreign rule, occupation, or papal dominance. They portrayed Luther, not Boniface, as the standard bearer of German liberty.[18] Conservative Catholic authors opposed this role for Luther and raised the question of unity from a different angle. Germans, so went their narrative, had been united by Boniface and stayed united as long as they were loyal to him and therefore by extension to Rome.[19] Rome stood for papal authority, seen as infallible by a dogma issued in 1870. Rome's clerical authority over laymen was absolute anathema for liberal constitutionalists and the liberal culture of scientific progress.[20] Also anathema was the position of the Holy See as a political sovereign, even if now deposed from its reign over the *patrimonium Petri* and the city of Rome, with ultramontane Catholics urging the German government to come to the military defense of the Pope (discussed in more detail below). In 1871 the Jesuit Florian Riess, for instance, wrote that "Rome is not the enemy but the mother of the German nation."[21] Catholics sought to reverse the relationship between Rome and the German nation that had been portrayed by liberal authors as antagonistic. The 1860s even saw a *Historikerstreit*, the

16 More generally, see Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870–1914* (Princeton, NJ: 1995); Barbara Stambolis, "Nationalisierung trotz Ultramontanisierung oder 'Alles für Deutschland. Deutschland aber für Christus': Mentalitätsleitende Wertorientierung deutscher Katholiken im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 269 (1999), 57–97.

17 Franz Heinrich Reinerding, *Der* heil. *Bonifazius als Apostel der Deutschen mit Bezugnahme auf sein Verhältnis zu Fulda* (Mainz: 1855).

18 Wolfgang Altgeld, "Religion, Denomination and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany 1800–1914*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: 2001), 49–65; Wolfgang Altgeld, *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum: Über religiös begründete Gegensätze und nationalreligiöse Ideen in der Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus* (Mainz: 1992).

19 See Weichlein, "Der Apostel der Deutschen," 155–79.

20 See David Blackbourn, "Progress and Piety: Liberalism, Catholicism and the State in Imperial Germany," *History Workshop* 26, no. 1 (1988), 57–78.

21 See Smith, *German Nationalism*, 64, where he quotes Florian Riess, "Rom und die Anfänge Deutschlands," *Stimmen aus Maria Laach* 1 (1871), 405.

Sybel-Ficker controversy, about the role of Rome with respect to the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.[22]

In earlier years Boniface had been presented as a moral and religious role model. Now, his longstanding characterization as "Apostle of the Germans" acquired an increasingly nationalist undertone, directed against other national mythologized figures like Arminius and Luther. This new grand historical narrative saw the Reformation as the prime reason for disunity, internal strife, and civil war. In contrast, the memory of Boniface promoted by Catholic writers was intended to evoke an era of religious unity and national harmony.

The presentation and utilization of Boniface mirrored this heightened national-religious debate as well as the sharpened religious divide. The decade before 1855 witnessed a replacement of the older dichotomy of "monotheism versus paganism" by the more contentious dichotomy of "unity versus diversity." Catholic authors linked national with religious questions. National unity was not primarily linguistic or cultural: in the eyes of Catholic conservatives, it was based solely on religious unity. Only religious unity, brought about by the missionary Boniface, guaranteed other forms of unity. For these Catholic writers, unity could not be brought about by states, politics, parties, parliaments, constitutions, or political philosophies like liberalism or constitutionalism: culture itself was seen as diverse and therefore unable to produce coherence. Only Christianity could provide stability and unity amid such diversity. The figure of Boniface was made to represent the strong anti-revolutionary sentiment among conservative Catholics. The cult of Boniface allowed for being Catholic and national at the same time. This national reading was the *cantus firmus* in the cult of Boniface throughout the 19th and 20th century.

4 Boniface and the Revolution of 1848

This identification of Catholicism and nationalism was epitomized in the Revolution of 1848. Boniface as the founder of the German nation was common in Catholic piety well into the 20th century. Still, the Revolution of 1848 added a specific anti-revolutionary and anti-Protestant dimension to Boniface. The revolution led by liberals in the German southwest and in Prussia tried to establish a German nation state on the basis of a Greater Germany that included

22 Thomas Brechenmacher, "Wieviel Gegenwart verträgt historisches Urteilen?: Die Kontroverse zwischen Heinrich von Sybel und Julius Ficker über die Bewertung der Kaiserpolitik des Mittelalters," in *Historische Debatten und Kontroversen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Jürgen Elvert and Susanne Kraus (Stuttgart: 2003), 34–54.

Austria, which meant unifying more than 30 states through a constitution and a democratically elected parliament. The idea of a Greater Germany ran into opposition from Austria and had to be dropped: if there was to be a German nation-state it had to come to terms with Prussia, the other leading German state. The Prussian monarchy was Protestant (in contrast to Austria), and so were most parts of its scattered territories, except for Silesia, Westphalia, and the Rhineland. Catholics, by contrast, had put their hopes in the Catholic emperor in Vienna, and were now disillusioned about their role in a future Germany. Particularly the devotees of Boniface saw themselves on the defensive.[23]

The Revolution of 1848 seemed to prove what conservative Catholics had argued all along: Germany had turned into a country that had lost its faith and was now a *Missionsland*; it had to be converted to Christianity all over again. The Revolution of 1848 sparked a strong domestic missionary zeal among the devotees of Boniface. Missionary activity had always been an important part of the devotion to Boniface, but in the period following 1848 it overshadowed all other aspects of the cult. The domestic mission in Germany was linked to Boniface, and his career was a historical argument to do missionary work in Germany. Already in 1842 Valentin Kehrer, a publicist from Aschaffenburg, called for building Catholic missions and supporting the existing Catholic parishes in Protestant northern Germany as a spiritual monument to Boniface. He and several other clerics from Spandau, Stendal, and Luebbecke organized a monthly book series on Boniface and the missions known as the "library for the holy mission of Catholic Germany." This project sought to strengthen the local Catholic parishes in northern Germany.[24]

The Revolution of 1848 led to a new wave of Catholic self-organization, particularly among lay Catholics. Besides the Pius Association (founded in 1848), the best-known was the Boniface Association (*Bonifatius Verein*, founded in 1849),[25] which exemplified the zeal for domestic missionary work or, to use a contemporary term, diaspora missions. Church historian Ignaz Döllinger promoted the idea of an association in honor of Boniface from early on. He and Joseph Count Stolberg initiated the Boniface Association at the third

23 Phil-young Kim, *Ein deutsches Reich auf katholischem Fundament: Einstellungen zur deutschen Nation in der strengkirchlichen katholischen Presse 1848–1850* (Frankfurt am Main: 2010); Hermann-Josef Scheidgen, *Der deutsche Katholizismus in der Revolution von 1848/49: Episkopat, Klerus, Laien, Vereine* (Cologne: 2008).

24 Anonymous, *Bonifacius-Denkmal: Eine Sammlung katholischer Volksbücher zur Unterhaltung und Glaubensvertheidigung* (Bonn: 1842–1847).

25 This organization still exists and has been known since 1968 as *Bonifatiuswerk der deutschen Katholiken*.

Catholic General Assembly (*Katholikentag*) in 1849 in Regensburg. Its statutes made clear that they believed only the Catholic Church could withstand revolutionary upheaval and bring about national unity: "Only Catholic love, originating from God, can bridge the yawning gap that divides our fatherland into two hostile armies. May they [those to whom our request for prayer and alms is directed] understand that as always, and thus today, only the church of Jesus Christ founded on St Peter's rock has the high privilege to command the waves of a raging sea, and turn away the threatening atrocities of impending barbarity."[26]

The Boniface Association's mission to the diaspora was quite different from other missionary endeavours in the 19th century. Rather than being a Church-led mission abroad, the Boniface Association's programme relied mainly on lay Catholics reaching out to their neighbors. It produced a constant flow of religious pamphlets and periodicals like the *Bonifazius-Blatt*, printed in Paderborn with a circulation of 17,000. The Boniface Association focused on Catholic education and schooling in regions where Catholics were a minority. This conscious effort to strengthen religious identity could also be seen among Protestants. Indeed, the Boniface Association was inspired by the 1832 foundation of a similar Protestant organization, known as the *Gustav-Adolf-Werk*.[27]

The founding of the Boniface Association as well as the events surrounding the 1100th anniversary celebrations of Boniface (held in 1855) epitomized the religious strife between the conservative and the liberal wings in both major churches. The seeds for this antagonism were sown earlier in the history of the church. The representative from Fulda at the General Catholic Assembly in Linz in 1850, Jakob Schell, saw striking parallels between the time of Boniface and post-revolutionary Germany. According to Schell, Boniface had overcome the darkness and misery of paganism and had made Germany great: "Who does not know what Germany became after its conversion through Saint Boniface and that it owed its splendor, power, and importance only to the Catholic faith?"[28] Any escape from Germany's present misery and secularism would therefore have to involve Boniface. This narrative took a rather bizarre twist

26 *Verhandlungen der dritten Generalversammlung des katholischen Vereins Deutschlands am 2., 3., 4. und 5. October 1849 zu Regensburg* (Regensburg: 1849), 217; Anton Jgnaz Kleffner and Friedrich Wilhelm Woker, *Der Bonifatiusverein: Seine Geschichte, seine Arbeit und sein Arbeitsfeld 1849–1899* (Paderborn: 1899).

27 Named for the Swedish King Gustavus Adolph, a brilliant military and administrative leader who put Protestant Sweden on the European forefront in the Thirty Years' War.

28 *Verhandlungen der vierten Generalversammlung des katholischen Vereines Deutschlands am 24., 25., 26., und 27. September 1850 zu Linz* (Linz: 1850), 146–47.

when Andreas Räß, Bishop of Strasbourg, demanded in 1855 at the Boniface Jubilee in Mainz that England be converted back to Catholicism by German missionaries. That way Germany could express its gratitude to England, whence Germany's conversion had originated but which had left Catholicism and turned heretic.[29] The motif of the conversion of England accompanied the Boniface cult from the 1840s onward.[30]

Between 1848 and 1855, Boniface was put to political use once again as a source of religious as well as national unity. This added to the religious conflict within German nationalism, with one church accusing the other of being anational or even anti-national. At the first Catholic General Assembly in Mainz in 1848, church historian Johann Nepomuk Sepp from Munich had already portrayed Boniface as the true founder of Germany. Sepp argued that Boniface had laid the foundation for any future political unification by imposing an ecclesiastical order and a territorial structure on the German lands: "One diocese after the other, one tribe after the other was drawn from here into the German national body."[31] Such a statement, made in Mainz, Boniface's seat, was an obvious refutation of Wittenberg as the German mythic city and Luther as the founder of Germany.

Bishop Emmanuel Ketteler from Mainz (1850–1877) explicitly considered himself a successor of Boniface. Ketteler was "the most influential Catholic author on questions of German national identity,"[32] and with many other Catholic authors he perpetuated the historical master narrative of Germany's glorious past in the Middle Ages, followed by a period of decay caused by the Protestant Reformation. In 1867 Ketteler wrote that "Germany was once the first nation in Europe and it held the royal crown which represented the highest temporal power on earth."[33] That echoed what he had written twelve years earlier, when inviting German Catholics to the 1100th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, at which occasion he praised Boniface as the true founder of Germany as a great nation. As Ketteler saw it, when Germans turned away from

29 Bonifatius Gams, *Die eilfte Säcularfeier des Martyrertodes des heiligen Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen, in Fulda und Mainz, vollständig geschildert mit den dabei gehaltenen Predigten, theils wörtlich, theils im Auszuge* (Mainz: 1855), 84–5.

30 Anonymus, "Die katholischen Zustände in England und Schottland," *Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland* 53 (1864), 861–73. For a report on the "Bekehrung Englands" from the Protestant side, see Adolf Hausrath, *Richard Rothe und seine Freunde*, vol. 2 (Berlin: 1902–1906), 350.

31 *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung des katholischen Vereins Deutschlands am 3., 4., 5. und 6. Oktober zu Mainz, Amtlicher Bericht* (Mainz: 1848), 65–9.

32 Smith, *German Nationalism*, 63.

33 Wilhelm Emmanuel Freiherr von Ketteler, "Deutschland nach dem Kriege von 1866 (1867)," *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Erwin Iserloh (Mainz: 1978), 47.

Boniface, their unity of faith was lost. Without explicitly pointing to the Reformation, Ketteler made that loss of unity responsible for all sorts of moral decay and crime. Protestant church historians like Adolph Hausrath felt personally insulted and wrote strong rebukes to Ketteler; the former Prussian envoy to the Holy See, Karl Josias von Bunsen, accused Ketteler of insulting German morality.[34]

5 Boniface in the Religious Press and Hymns

In Benedict Anderson's terms, the figure of Boniface served the function of building an imagined community between members that had no face-to-face contact.[35] Catholic associations, rallies, and the press all imagined a German Catholic community. Among those associations, the Boniface Association was prominent. With their statutes, assemblies, and boards these associations emulated the liberal repertoire of political mobilization, a repertoire employed since the Industrial Revolution began in the 1840s.[36] But in terms of their political programme, Catholics and bourgeois liberals were at opposite ends of the spectrum. The press had become something of a backbone for communication among Catholics. The *Bonifazius-Blatt* provided a platform for spiritual as well as religious communication among the venerators of St Boniface.[37] Also, Boniface had his monuments, such as the Boniface statue in Fulda erected in 1842.[38] Boniface devotees sang hymns in praise of their saint. Constant repetition of these songs and hymns made Boniface part of religious memory. With them went a religious narrative that saw Christianity in decline, from unity in Boniface's time to disunity in and after the Protestant Reformation. As was the case during the Counter-Reformation of the 17th century, Protestants

34 Ketteler's pastoral letter can be found in Gams, *Die eilfte Säcularfeier*, 7–21; see also Christian Karl Josias Freiherr von Bunsen, *Die Zeichen der Zeit: Brief an Freunde über die Gewissensfreiheit und das Recht der christlichen Gemeinde* (Leipzig: 1856), 57, 77–8.

35 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: 2003).

36 Klaus Tenfelde, "Die Entfaltung des Vereinswesens während der industriellen Revolution in Deutschland (1850–1873)," *Historische Zeitschrift*. Supplement 9 (1984), 55–114.

37 Another publication of the *Bonifatiusverein* was the *Bonifatiusbroschüren*, a series of low-priced "militantly apologetic" pamphlets for a lay audience with expositions on Catholicism and its enemies (a half a dozen of which are virulently antisemitic). These were published in Paderborn between 1870 and 1910, and sold through the mail and through bookstores. See Olaf Blaschke, "Bonifacius Brochüren," in *Handbuch des Antisemitismus: Publikationen*, ed. Brigitte Mihok, vol. 6 (Berlin: 2013), 76–7.

38 *Das Monument des heiligen Bonifazius und dessen feierliche Enthüllung* (Fulda: 1842).

were considered heretics, to be rooted out in the future in order to restore the unity of the church under Rome. Such Boniface hymns were common in many hymn and prayer books used in the dioceses; one of them dated back to 1623 and was still in use in 1890. It went as far as advocating religious warfare against Protestant heretics:

> Im Weinberg, den mit Fleiße,
> du bis zum Tod gepflegt,
> das Unkraut bald ausreiße,
> des er so vieles trägt.
>
> Das Ketzertum ausreute,
> weil's Gott zuwider ist,
> die alte Lehr' ausbreite,
> besieg des Feindes List.[39]
>
> [May you eradicate all weeds, which grow so abundantly in the vineyard you nursed until your death; may you eradicate heresy because it is contrary to God, and spread the old faith, overcoming the enemy's cunning.]

Boniface pilgrimages were held every summer in June and were also organized for special occasions. Acts of devotion to Boniface included missionary work, daily masses, pontifical masses, constant opportunities to confess, and series of sermons. New churches built east of the Rhine often bore Boniface's name – in Bavarian dioceses, in Thuringia, Fulda, Limburg, and Paderborn (new churches west of the Rhine maintained the older tradition of dedication to Roman martyrs).[40] Taken together, the political significance of Boniface could be expressed in an array of formats oriented towards building spiritual community. Such acts were part and parcel of the Catholic renewal in the 19th century, a movement that was also taking place in Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.[41] The German, Austrian, and French versions were epitomized by one shared characteristic: they were profoundly anti-revolutionary. All repudiated liberal constitutionalism and aligned themselves with the monarchies who came out as winners in the revolutionary battles of 1848/49. The German Catholic hierarchy presented itself as belonging to the forces of order

39 *Gesang- und Gebetbuch für die Diözese Fulda*, no. 151 (Fulda: 1890), 156.

40 Bruder, "Kirchen, Kapellen, Altäre," 114–21, 222–27, 279–83, 324–28, 371–76, 410–15.

41 Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "Piety and Politics: Recent Work on German Catholicism," *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991), 681–716.

and in alliance with the monarchies against the forces of disorder embodied by liberal constitutionalism. The Catholic renewal did not oppose the political establishment but rather supported divinely ordained monarchies (*Gottesgnadentum*). Local studies have placed the renewal either between 1830 and 1850, for Koblenz and Trier, or in the decade after the 1848 Revolution, for northern Rhineland and Westphalia.[42]

The year 1855 was a pinnacle of the Catholic renewal with the 1100th anniversary celebrations of Boniface's martyrdom in Fulda and Mainz. The high numbers of participants in 1855 stood out, and their significance was not lost on the contemporaries. Thirteen thousand faithful paid fees while crossing the Rheinbrücke at Mainz for the celebrations. Between forty and fifty thousand people came from out of town at the height of the celebrations, and between twenty and thirty thousand pilgrims came the day after, according to *Der Katholik*, an ultramontane monthly publication in Mainz. The celebrations in Fulda drew similar numbers: altogether, around one hundred thousand pilgrims seem to have visited St Boniface's grave in June 1855, almost double the number of visitors to the 1150th anniversary celebrations in 1905.[43] It is important to note that these pilgrims visited Mainz and Fulda under clerical guidance, rather than roaming freely on their own. The 1855 pilgrimages may be seen as evidence of an increased clerical control of popular piety.[44]

During the 1100th anniversary, Jesuits were eager to point out the long history of the Catholic Church in Germany. Against the common perception of everlasting change and turmoil, the Jesuit Josef von Lamazan emphasized the rock-solid continuity of the Church: "Though everything is changing, today we see, after eleven centuries, the same Church, the same cult, the same hierarchy, the successors of those bishops whose bishoprics Saint Boniface founded 1100 years ago."[45] The guiding paradigm in his strongly anti-revolutionary message was order against disorder, and the Catholic Church stood for order. To von

42 For Koblenz and Trier, see Christoph Weber, *Aufklärung und Orthodoxie am Mittelrhein 1820–1850* (Paderborn: 1973) and Wolfgang Schieder, "Kirche und Revolution. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (1974), 419–54; for Northern Rhineland and Westphalia, see Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: 1984).

43 Gams, *Die eilfte Säcularfeier*, 63.

44 Cf. Volker Speth, *Katholische Aufklärung und Ultramontanismus, Religionspolizey und Kultfreiheit, Volkseigensinn und Volksfrömmigkeitsformierung: Das rheinische Wallfahrtswesen von 1826 bis 1870* (Frankfurt am Main: 2010).

45 Gams, *Die eilfte Säcularfeier*, 75: "Während sich Alles verändert, erblicken wir nach elf Jahrhunderten noch heute dieselbe Kirche, denselbe Cultus, dieselbe Hierarchie, die Nachfolger jener Bischöfe, deren Stühle vor elf Jahrhunderten der heil. Bonifacius gegründet."

Lamazan, the historical moment of 1848 was an Armageddon between the forces of Catholicism and those of revolution. The forces of God were led by Boniface himself, who stood against the evils of contemporary society: skepticism, indifference, cowardice, sensuality. The 1100th anniversary underwrote the anti-revolutionary alliance between the Catholic hierarchy and the state in the name of order, which had become already apparent in 1844 with another mass event of the Catholic revival: the Trier pilgrimage to the Holy Tunic, which Jesus supposedly wore during his crucifixion and which the Empress Helena had later brought to Trier.[46] This was a religious mass event that drew tens of thousands, mostly from the lower classes in the Rhineland, who showed their support for the Catholic Church and the Church's attachment to the Prussian monarchy. Trier in 1844 as well as Mainz and Fulda in 1855 saw Catholic authorities acting in alliance with the conservative state.[47]

The timing of the anniversary added to the sense of sharp religious conflict: that same year Protestants celebrated the 400th anniversary of the Peace of Augsburg (1555). The Augsburg settlement of 1555 settled the religious conflict that had arisen after 1517 with Martin Luther and made the division between Catholics and Lutherans permanent. Many Protestants saw the Boniface celebrations, highlighting unity under the Roman papacy, as a deliberate insult to the memory of Martin Luther. Even conservative Protestants, generally more prone to fraternize with their Catholic counterparts, reacted with disgust. For them Boniface was not a missionary but rather a papal envoy, not a preacher of the Gospel but a church organizer. Those who venerated Boniface, in their view, continued a long tradition of suppression, and only the Reformation had put a stop to this unholy use of the Gospel. The celebrations in Mainz and Fulda were proof to the Protestant state authorities that Catholics were in command of the lower classes.[48] The theologian David Erdmann, Superintendent of Silesia, went a step further in his counterattack. For Erdmann, the wrongdoings of Boniface, who he argued had done nothing more than try to impose Roman authority on the Germans, were undone by Luther's Reformation: "After 800 years, Boniface was succeeded, on the same spot of German soil, by Luther as the Apostle of the Germans." To Protestants like Erdmann, Martin Luther was the true Apostle of the Germans.[49]

46 Wolfgang Schieder, *Religion und Revolution: Die Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844* (Vierow bei Greifswald: 1996).

47 Schieder, *Kirche und Revolution*, 419–54.

48 Hausrath, *Richard Rothe*, 350.

49 David Erdmann, *Winfried oder Bonifacius, der Apostel der Deutschen: Ein im evangelischen Verein am 30.5.1855 gehaltener Vortrag* (Berlin: 1855), 4–5, 32.

6 Boniface after 1871

While many Protestants viewed the celebration of Boniface's 1100th anniversary as an affront, not all Protestants opposed the new image of Boniface being promoted by Catholics: some conservative Lutherans, like the historian Heinrich Leo from Halle or the Berlin court chaplain Wilhelm Hengstenberg, maintained a measure of loyalty to the saint. Others, like the liberal Reformed Church historian Johannes Heinrich August Ebrard from Erlangen, understood why Boniface was of particular importance for the Roman Catholic Church, but reversed the interpretation and included the era before Boniface: Ebrard thought that contemporary Protestantism should not look to Boniface for inspiration but to the churches predating him. According to Ebrard, the pre-Bonifatian churches, founded by Iro-Scottish monks who were not under Roman control, had the true evangelical spirit that brought a non-Roman Christianity to Germany. For Ebrard, and later for Otto Wissig, Boniface had destroyed the independence of these older churches by placing them under Roman control; they argued that the separation of church and state was therefore older than the Reformation and predated Boniface. From that perspective, Luther had revived a tradition that Boniface had destroyed. Boniface's Roman authority was seen as an illegitimate intrusion into a world of independent churches; for such Protestant liberals, Christianity, Christian Germany, and the German nation as a whole originated in an era long before Boniface.[50]

Both interpretations obviously read their contemporary political and religious visions back onto the 7th and 8th centuries. While both sides constantly quoted and debated history, they nonetheless shared a profoundly ahistorical approach: once Christianized, the German nation existed *in nuce* and all its features were already there *in potentia*. The political uses of Boniface in this period were ahistorical for Catholic as well as conservative Protestant theology, an approach that dictated that Christian morals and church teachings were not subject to historical change or interpretation. In theological as well as in political terms, making truth claims subject to historical change was tantamount to deviation, creating disorder through disunity.[51]

50 Johannes Heinrich August Ebrard, *Die iroschottische Missionskirche des 6., 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts und ihre Verbreitung und Bedeutung auf dem Festland* (Gütersloh: 1873), vi; see also his *Bonifatius, der Zerstörer des columbanischen Kirchentums auf dem Festlande* (Gütersloh: 1882).

51 See Rudolf Uertz, *Vom Gottesrecht zum Menschenrecht: das katholische Staatsdenken in Deutschland von der Französischen Revolution bis zum II. Vatikanischen Konzil (1789–1965)* (Paderborn: 2005).

Two events in the later 19th century laid out the significance of Boniface in the age of the nation-state. In 1867 the German bishops held their first meeting in Fulda. In the Northern German Confederation, after 1867, the need for coordination among Catholic bishops grew, because without coordination there would be no common voice and position vis à vis the government. In the newly unified Germany, Protestants had immediate access to the Prussian throne since the Prussian kings were also head of the church. Catholics lacked that access to power and had no representation in political institutions. An annual conference of bishops was one route to achieving unity, and the bishops chose Fulda and the tomb of St Boniface as the location for that conference. The Fulda bishops' conference developed into the main episcopal representation of the Catholic national hierarchy.[52] In addition to the Fulda conference, from 1873 until 1933 the Bavarian bishops had their own conference in Freising. When Italian troops occupied Rome on 12 and 13 October 1870, German, Polish, Dutch, and Swiss Catholics rallied in Fulda, the town closely associated with Boniface and therefore with Rome, to publicly condemn what they called the "rape of the Holy Father." The liberal press shared this sentiment, though with a reversed interpretation. The liberal *Vossische Zeitung* from Berlin saw Fulda, where the bishops met every fall, as the Vatican-recognized center of Catholic anti-national power in Germany.[53] In 1874, at the height of *Kulturkampf*, Rome declared St Boniface's day a feast for the whole Roman Catholic Church with its own liturgy and prayers, making it a *festum duplex* with *officium* and *missa propria*. In this way, Rome reinforced the efforts of the German Catholic Church to promote the cult of St Boniface as a response to liberal Protestant nationalism.

The 1150th anniversary of 1905 showed again a different and less polemical Boniface: its organizers were eager to prove the willingness of the Catholic community to be part of the German nation. The celebrations at Fulda demonstrated a united Catholic Germany and served as a platform for clerics and bishops, rather than for lay Catholics from the Center Party. Eighty-nine trains brought about fifty thousand pilgrims to Fulda between 3 and 11 June 1905. The speeches and sermons commemorated Boniface as a cultural apostle who had brought erudition and education to the German lands. That positive message resonated with the Catholic bourgeoisie, which had now, after the end of the *Kulturkampf*, found its place in the social and political fabric of the German empire. Associations like the *Akademische Bonifatiuseinigung* (Academic

52 Stephan Hilpisch, "Die erste Fuldaer Bischofskonferenz im Jahre 1867," *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 43 (1967), 141–44.

53 Weichlein, "Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger," 219–34, 230.

Boniface Union) catered to Catholic students eager to rise up in the ranks of the educated classes. It was no coincidence that at this time the learned discourse about Boniface reached a new level. In 1905, the Bonn medievalist Wilhelm Levison edited the *Vitae Sancti Bonifatii* as volume 57 of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, the flagship of editions among German historiography.[54] Nearly fifty years later, his student Theodor Schieffer would write a scholarly biography of Boniface for the 1200th anniversary.[55]

The *Akademische Bonifatiuseinigung* and its periodical *Bonifatius-Korrespondenz* underscored the importance of education for Catholics, encouraging them to enter German academic and university life, but with a specific goal which was derived from a spiritual reading of Boniface's mission. Academic life was, in their eyes, fundamentally irreligious and had to be missionized: "Universities are and remain for the forseeable future quite undisputably in the hands of unbelievers," the *Bonifatius-Korrespondenz* argued in 1908, referring to Austria.[56] Universities and academic life were seen as a fertile ground for missionary activities of Boniface's kind: the Donar Oak of the 20th century, liberal agnosticism, had to be cut down.

7 Boniface in the Interwar Years

Unlike the Protestant view of Luther, the political significance of Boniface survived the defeat of World War I in 1918. Whereas the unity of throne and altar was lost in the transition from the German Empire to the Weimar Republic, conservative Catholics felt reassured by Boniface of the "true unity" of Germany. The memory of Boniface's mission to Central Europe was part of the reinvigorated self-consciousness among Catholics after 1918. Unity was not to be found in constitutions, monarchies, or party politics. Contemporaries had witnessed their change and withering. For Catholic elites, true unity was still founded in religion.[57]

54 Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vitae sancti Bonifatii archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover and Leipzig: 1905).

55 Theodor Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg: 1954).

56 *Bonifatius-Korrespondenz*, 1908: "Die Universitäten sind und bleiben auf absehbare Zeit so ziemlich unbestritten in den Händen des Unglaubens." See Weichlein, "Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger," 230.

57 Siegfried Weichlein, "Die Zwischenkriegszeit 1918–1933," in *Handbuch der Religionsgeschichte im deutschsprachigen Raum: 20. Jahrhunder – Epochen und Themen*, eds. Volkhard Krech and Lucian Hölscher (Paderborn: 2015), 61–112.

The Nazi ideology held specific assumptions about the Germanic tribes in the early Middle Ages. Both Catholic scholars and Nazi writers (like Alfred Rosenberg) saw the relationship between the Germanic tribes and Christianity at the centre of German identity, but whereas Catholic scholars and journals like *Christi Reich* ('Christ's Empire') clung to the Christianization of the Germanic tribes as a positive development, Rosenberg insisted on a reverse interpretation: the Germanization of Christianity. He criticized the continued memory of Boniface as glorifying a history of disempowerment. In his seminal treatise *The Myth of the 20th Century*, he openly despised Boniface: "From Bonifacius by way of Ludwig the Pious, who made efforts to destroy everything Teutonic with fire and sword, and a total of over nine million murdered heretics, we pass to the Vatican Council which up to the present represents a unique attempt to assert a merciless uniform spiritual belief: one form, one compulsory dogma, and one rite, identically for Nordics, Levantines, negroes, Chinese, and Eskimos."[58] Rosenberg believed that every race had to have its own faith, creed, language, and rite. Christianity was guilty in Rosenberg's eyes of replacing racial diversity with Christian and moral universalism, and therefore had to be reversed.

Within the ideological dispute between the Catholic Church and Nazism, the interpretation of the role of Christianity in the early Middle Ages played no small role, although it did not take center stage. Many bishops, like Wilhelm Berning from Osnabrück, supported the anti-Marxist tenets of Nazi politics and even applauded the *Führerprinzip*, but when it came to race and religion Berning argued for the superiority of religion. In his sermon in June 1934 for the Boniface Octave, he took on Rosenberg: "Religion is not the revelation of blood or race, but is founded in the revelation of the eternal God. It is an aberration to reject the Old Testament and accept the New Testament only insofar as it seems to be the expression of Germanic blood."[59] This debate no longer had any confessional dispute between Catholics and Protestants at its centre; it went beyond religious infighting. This was echoed in the learned discourse about Boniface. Johannes Haller's *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit* (1934–1945) brought the research on Boniface to an academic level.[60] He argued that

58 Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, trans. James Whisker (Munich: 1930), 144–45, available online: https://archive.org/stream/TheMythOfThe20thCentury/MythOfThe20thCentury#page/n143/mode/2up/search/ludwig.

59 Weichlein, "Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger," 233.

60 Johannes Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit 4 vols., Stuttgart 1934–1945*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: 1934); Benjamin Hasselhorn and Johannes Haller, *Johannes Haller: Eine politische*

Protestant historiography portrayed Boniface as nothing more than a Protestant missionary or a 19th-century Prussian church superintendent, with the papacy serving as a board of directors for missions. Modern historiographers, he warned, had to move away from these stereotypes if they wanted to grasp the full meaning of Boniface.

8 Boniface in the Cold War Era

The post-World War II memory of Boniface was set in a very different environment. After 1945, Boniface stood, in the eyes of most German Catholics and many Protestants, for the West which had to be defended against atheist Communism. Boniface was no longer (just) the founder of Germany, but rather the founder of a Carolingian Europe that reached from the Pyrenees to the River Elbe and was even equated with the geographical reach of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, founded 1949). A decade later he was also associated with the establishment of the European Economic Community, founded in the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Latin Christianity in the West could roughly be identified with the political West of the Cold War, except the US and Canada. The narrative was relatively simple and straightforwardly European: Boniface's mission from England to Central Europe had secured the ascent of the Carolingian dynasty and of Charlemagne. His alliance with the pope secured Charlemagne the title of an emperor and solidified his reign over what would be called the "Christian Occident." Consequently, Boniface was no longer the "Apostle of the Germans" but the "Apostle of Europe"; he became the guarantor of the Christian West in its resistance to atheist Soviet Russia.

The preparations for the 1200th anniversary in 1954 had a national as well as a European dimension, both shaped by the Cold War.[61] The national dimension resulted from Germany's partition and the fact that major sites for for devotion to Boniface lay in Thuringia, in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Pius XII as well as the bishops in East and West Germany used the anniversary to appeal for the unity of the German church in East and West, at a time when the faithful and the bishops were no longer able to move freely and

Gelehrtenbiographie. Mit einer Edition des unveröffentlichten Teils der Lebenserinnerungen Johannes Hallers (Göttingen: 2015).

61 The anniversary was held in 1954 rather than in 1955; in 1903, Tangl established that Boniface had died in 754 and not in 755. Michael Tangl, "Das Todesjahr des Bonifatius," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde*, n.s. 27 (1903), 223–50.

deliberate common matters *in corpore*. The Vatican ambassador to Germany, Aloisius Muench, participated in Erfurt in the East, as well as in Mainz and Fulda in the West. Numerous speeches and sermons insisted on the unity of the German hierarchy and the church. For the Eastern Catholic periodical *Tag des Herrn* (Day of the Lord), Boniface offered the opportunity to communicate across borders. At a conference on Boniface held in advance of the anniversary, Karl Böhmer from Erfurt saw in open defiance of the Communist authorities a parallel between the Franconian church with its immoral clerics in the 8th century and East Germany (GDR) in the present. Böhmer claimed that just as Boniface had resisted the repressive regime in the 8th century, Catholics in the present should look to Rome for guidance and help. The core of that argument, help from Rome against a repressive regime at home, could easily be transferred to other countries and continents even without mentioning Boniface. Consequently, East German Catholics were staunchly conservative in their adherence to the Roman papacy. The pilgrimage to Boniface's tomb in 1954 was a national event, with participants from West and East: the faithful experienced a sense of being not only part of one church, but also of one country.[62]

Besides strengthening the religious identity among Catholics in West and East Germany and orienting them toward Rome, the Boniface anniversary in 1954 underpinned the role of Catholicism as an independent social and cultural force and tried to provide a bridge between West and East German Catholics;[63] it was part of a larger movement to invigorate the Catholic Church and demonstrate its independence.

The anniversary of 1954 did not build on any popular piety for Saint Boniface. Unlike the cults of other saints like St Martin or St Nicholas, the cult of Boniface did not feature popular images, rites, or traditions. Besides the yearly pilgrimages, Boniface's cult was primarily maintained by members of the church hierarchy. The use of Boniface as a political figure lost much of its importance with the re-evaluation of Roman centrism in the Second Vatican council and its new outlook on local and national churches. The devotion to Boniface remained largely a matter of regional tradition in Fulda and Mainz. For West German Catholicism, other role models turned out to be more characteristic and productive, particularly those embodying solidarity and charity: e.g. Elisabeth from Thuringia or Francis of Assisi, and, at the end of the century, Mother Theresa.

62 Mathias Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr 1954 im allgemeinpolitischen und gesamtkirchlichen Kontext," in: *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 375–410, esp. 401; Heinz Löwe, "Vom Bild des Bonifatius in der neueren deutschen Geschichtsschreibung," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 6 (1955), 539–55.

63 Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr," 401.

9 The Memory of Boniface in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Through the 19th and 20th centuries we find at least three ways in which Boniface was put to political use. In the early 19th century Boniface was a biconfessional figure exhibiting the values of the Enlightenment. He was seen as a historical figure full of virtues, whose personality served as an example for the moral education and betterment of the people. Religion and morality were balanced in this figure.

Around 1848 a more polemical Boniface rose to prominence. He was a fervently Catholic figure, anti-Protestant to the core. This political interpretation of Boniface focused on his Rome-supported mission, which was understood to be the centre and the origin of German Christian culture. Boniface was not only the "Apostle of the Germans," a title he had had for a long time, but the founder of Germany, a unifier of the different tribes under the Christian church led by the pope in Rome, who in turn effectively guaranteed the unity of the German tribes. This Catholic founding myth of Germany put Boniface in opposition to Luther and made him decidedly anti-liberal.

By 1900 Boniface began to serve as a role model for education (*Bildung*). This modern Boniface was a cultural apostle: he combined religion and education and helped Catholics advance on the social ladder. Boniface was no longer a primarily anti-Protestant figure. Where earlier he had given Catholics an ideological entry into Germany and the German nation, after 1945 he provided them with an idea of European unity: after the Second World War, Christianity was presented as a common denominator for Western Europe against Communism, and Boniface was rebranded as the "Apostle of Europe." The Carolingian empire had extended from the Pyrenees to the Elbe, and Boniface had been part of that missionary effort that led to the formation of that empire, an exact blueprint, along the same territorial lines, for European integration in 1957. With Christianity set against atheism, Boniface turned into an anti-Communist warrior: the Cold War had taken hold of Boniface.

CHAPTER 18

Popular Veneration and the Image of Boniface in the Modern Era

Michel Aaij

1 Introduction

Until well into the 20th century, prayer cards and other representations of Boniface typically portrayed him as an old bishop, with the accoutrements of his martyrdom: a book and a sword. These two symbols (sometimes combined into one, a book pierced with a dagger) came to emblematize him: the book reflected the Ragyndrudis Codex, regarded as a shield to ward off heathen axe blows, and the sword was a transformed version of that axe.[1] This composite and static image of a man already martyred found its way onto much of the mass-produced devotional material throughout the 19th century and after. Much of this material is German, but such images were also commonplace in England, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. At their most complex, such single images represent an account of Boniface's life and death, but they can be read allegorically as well: many of the German cards provide us with a view of the history of the German conversion and the foundation of Germany as a country.

Prayer cards offer direct evidence of the saint's meaning to a religious community. These cards played an important role in everyday Catholicism: they were given as gifts or rewards by family members and Sunday school teachers,

1 The literature on the Ragyndrudis Codex is extensive; the most comprehensive discussion is Lutz E. von Padberg, "Bonifatius und die Bücher," in *Der Ragyndrudis-Codex des hl. Bonifatius*, eds. Lutz E. von Padberg and Hans-Walter Stork (Paderborn: 1994), 7–75, esp. 30–31. Von Padberg more or less definitively does away with the *Schutzhypothese*, the "protection hypothesis" that claims that Boniface indeed used the Ragyndrudis Codex as a shield, but the tradition is persistent. The replacement of the axe by the sword may have been become more popular because of a well-known Dutch engraving of the saint by Bloemaert, ca. 1630, where the weapon has become Boniface's. See Olga Kotková, "Willibrord und Bonifatius in der Darstellung bei Bloemaert und Colaert: Die Polarität ihrer Abbildung in der nordniederländischen Kunst des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Petersberg: 2004), 203–18.

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young people traded them, and many collected them in their church books.[2] The images continued the tradition of usually straightforward emblematism found also in other aspects of popular Catholicism, where saints are easily recognizable by their attributes, and the accompanying texts promoted pious behavior and imparted moral lessons. Boniface's eventful life provided plenty of material for the burgeoning industry of mass-produced religious paraphernalia, and the plenitude of such cards is indicated by how many are still available on auction sites today.

A prayer card (Image 18.1) from the mid-19th century illustrates these elements well. The old, bearded saint holds up an open book pierced with a dagger, a very familiar image, but a closer study shows how carefully these cards could be constructed. Willibald's *vita* of Boniface states that the manuscripts found at the martyrium were found "unharmed and intact" and continued to save souls.[3] The text in those manuscripts, then, ought to be legible, and indeed, the dagger pierces the binding in the center, without damaging or obliterating the text (Fulda's Boniface statue expresses the same thought, by the saint holding up an opened book with the text "Verbum domini manet in aeternum" [God's word remains eternally]). The statue and the figure on the prayer card also share the cross or *ferula*, which the saint holds in his right hand as a symbol of the faith he brought to the Germans at the price of his life. In some images he has a crozier, but not in these: the crozier suggests his position as bishop in a Roman hierarchy, the cross is a more general Christian symbol, appropriate to the image of Boniface as an apostle to all the Germans, which was how he was broadly understood in Germany across the denominations in the early 19th century. On his left the stump of the Donar Oak and the axe lie at his feet, and on his right, we see a broken fluted pillar of a Greek, not Roman, order. Puzzling as the pillar may seem, the card's symmetry unlocks the allegory: in the background behind the stump is a pine forest, and behind the pillar a church is under construction. The German oak is replaced by a new forest, pine or spruce, not associated with Germanic, pre-Christian beliefs; these conifers more quickly provide the building materials a new country

2 J.A.J.M. Verspaandonk, *Het hemels prentenboek: Devotie- en bidprentjes vanaf de 17e eeuw tot het begin van de 20e eeuw* (Gooi en Sticht: 1975), 5; James F. Petruzzelli, "Catholic Holy Cards: Visual, Verbal, and Tactile Codes for the (In)visible," in *The Other Print Tradition: Essays on Chapbooks, Broadsides, and Related Ephemera*, eds. Cathy Lynn Preston and Michael J. Preston (Abingdon-on-Thames: 1995), 266–83. An insightful analysis of such mass-produced objects is Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca: 2005).

3 Willibald, *VB*, c. 8, 51.

IMAGE 18.1 Mid-19th-century German prayer card, from the Boniface Association

needs.[4] The classical pillar makes way for the Christian church – in some versions of the card the church is recognizably Fulda's cathedral. The entire image is framed by a set of Romanesque arches with Tuscan columns: the Roman style of architecture dominates the image and forms the basis and background

4 After widespread deforestation in the Middle Ages, Hans Carl von Carlowitz (1645–1714) was instrumental in the replanting of large areas with pine and spruce, fast-growing trees that thrived where formerly beech and oak grew; see *Der Wald in Deutschland: Ausgewählte Ergebnisse der dritten Bundeswaldinventur*. Bundesministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft, 3rd ed. (Berlin: 2018), esp. 5–6, 12–14.

for the display of verse 6 from Psalm 2, which celebrates the order imposed by God on a chaotic world, and allegorizes the history of Germany and its conversion as a type of the establishment of the Kingdom of Judea.[5]

Two other popular images of Boniface are derived from events described in his *vitae*, presenting either an elderly Boniface at his martyrdom, often protecting his head with the book; or a (sometimes younger) Boniface in the process of cutting down the famous Donar Oak. Individual images of the saint (for sometimes his life was depicted chronologically in a series of images) thus typically either combine his entire life and death and afterlife into one, or they show the two most striking scenes from Willibald's *vita*. From the Middle Ages on he is usually old and bearded as befits a wise old moralist, a stern man whose gravitas was earned in a long life of sacrifice, and whose image usually suggests that his martyrdom at old age was the crown of his work. He would retain this image until well into the early 20th century. Still, within those schemata there are options and variations: the saint's age is at least hypothetically a variable, as are perspective and additional graphic elements, for instance, and of course style. The image one chooses to represent the saint in any specific circumstance, whether it be a frontispiece of a book, a prayer card, a membership card of a Catholic organization, or a logo for a musical, reflects what one thinks of the saint, what one wants an audience to see or think, and what one wants the saint to accomplish in the world.

The cult of any saint reflects desire, intent, hope, and faith on the part of all the participants in a complex transaction. The image of Saint Boniface, and the particularities of his cult, remained relatively unchanged between the Middle Ages and the Napoleonic period, and had survived the vicissitudes of the Reformation and religious and social upheaval all over Europe. But starting with the rise of nationalism that follows the demise of Napoleon's empire, circumstances and events in European history affected the local traditions in the centres of Boniface's cult at Fulda, Mainz, Dokkum, and, to a lesser extent, Utrecht and England, in very different ways, changing the image of Boniface and the meaning of his veneration considerably. In England, his cult remained minor,[6]

5 While this card presents a triptych of three panels, the center panel higher than the other two, its layout is reminiscent of the graphic presentation of the four gospels in the *Codex Fuldensis*, one of the three codices associated with Boniface and held in Fulda. The canon tables are presented in four-paneled images, the arched panels separated by columns. *Tatianus, Epistulae Pauli, Actus Apostolorum, Epistulae Catholicae, Apocalypsis*, Fulda MS 100, 5r-12v, https://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/resolver?urn=urn:nbn:de:hebis:66:fuldig-2625053. Thus, Boniface not only brings the gospel (literally), he also signifies it.

6 The "National Shrine to Boniface" located in the St Boniface Catholic Church, Crediton, attracts a modest number of pilgrims. Internet searches show regular but minor pilgrimages,

and today interest in him is only driven by specific local circumstances: he is a motor to the economy of his alleged birthplace, Crediton in Devon, and is remembered also by a Benedictine foundation where some of the abbots were German.[7] There is little evidence of much religious veneration in England[8] and the image and legacy of the saint are limited to the somewhat abbreviated idea of an Englishman who missionized on the Continent.[9] That Boniface might become the patron saint of Devon is a mostly symbolic gesture.[10] As Petra Kehl notes elsewhere in this volume, in England "the memory of Boniface largely faded into oblivion."

In Germany, a true religious cult still seems to exist, though it has weakened with secularization. Boniface, first the apostle of the Germans and later the apostle of Germany, remains important to German Catholicism and is known to the population in general. Both Fulda and Mainz retain their strong Bonifacian associations and the saint continues to generate touristic, scientific, and popular interest. In the profoundly secular Netherlands, one cannot speak of a cult anymore, but Boniface is well-known among the general population as a canonical figure, where he is either a victim of martyrdom or a tourist

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by local groups and churches in Devon. See "National Shrine for St Boniface," St Boniface Church Crediton, 2017, http://www.catholicchurchcrediton.org/index.php/national-shrine; for the 1980 celebrations, Sally Beament, ed., *St Boniface Handbook* (Crediton: 1980).

7 Buckfast Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in Devon, was dissolved in 1559 but the grounds were bought and the monastery restored by French Benedictines in 1882. German Abbot Bruno Fehrenbacher dedicated the monastery's 1954 journal to the saint, and expressed contentment at the German Benedictine monks in England having come "full circle" with "the raising up again of a Benedictine abbey in his native country by the hands and energy of men who inherited their Christian faith from his converts in Germany"; Bruno Fehrenbacher, "Preface," *Buckfast Abbey Chronicle* 24.2 (1954), 3.

8 Dokkum's mayor attended the 1955 celebration in Crediton and Exeter and published a booklet on it – otherwise we would know very little about the actual events; Sybren van Tuinen, *Bonifaes yn it bertelân bitocht* (*1955*) (Dokkum: 1955).

9 The minor but steady current of interest in Boniface is primarily local or academic. The Anglican Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge published Isaac Gregory Smith's biography in 1896, and a series of lectures by George Forrest Brown in 1906. Historian George Greenaway, at the request of Bishop Mortimer of Exeter, wrote a biography for the 1955 celebrations: *Saint Boniface: Three Biographical Studies for the Twelfth Centenary Festival* (London: 1955). Timothy Reuter's edited collection *The Greatest Englishman* (Exeter: 1980) was published for the celebrations of the 1300th anniversary of Boniface's birth. That same year local press Paternoster published an illustrated biography for a young audience by David Keep, *Boniface and His World* (Exeter: 1980). John Sladden's *Boniface of Devon* (Exeter: 1980) is a more academic biography.

10 "St Boniface could be Devon patron saint," BBC, May 14, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-devon-47541151.

attraction or, sometimes, a destroyer of an independent Frisian culture. This chapter surveys the popular veneration and image of Boniface in Germany and the Netherlands over the last century and a half: how the character of Boniface varies among different faith communities and in different locales, and the extent to which his cult endures.

The legacy of Boniface, however, has aspects that fall outside of religiosity and are not confined to his veneration among the faithful: like all saints, he also carries cultural, national, historical, and financial capital. Some of this can be measured by the number of books and articles published, especially around important anniversaries. The life of Boniface continues to interest writers and readers, and many of the publications show that scholarly, historical, spiritual, and financial interests can come together to stabilize or modify his image, to provide an impetus for local tourism, to allow academic and popular writers to publish for different and varied audiences. For this reason I am interested in not just the actual veneration, which presupposes faith, but also in image and image building, and in the criticism of the saint, which has come from many corners.

2 Germany

2.1 *The 19th and Early 20th Centuries*

Fulda and Mainz remained the most important German centers of veneration.[11] In the first part of the 19th century, a time of relative peace between Catholicism and Protestantism, Boniface was a non-polarizing figure whose reputation as Apostle of the Germans was mostly undisputed and unproblematic. The rise of German nationalism in the early 1800s promoted linguistic and cultural unification; in such an atmosphere Boniface served an important unifying function and, coupled with a renewed sense of Catholic identity, this led to what has been called a "Boniface renaissance."[12]

11 The Fulda tradition is discussed by Janneke Raaijmakers in this volume. The tradition in Mainz is treated extensively in Stephanie Haarländer, "Bonifatius im Mainz: Die Überlieferung vom 8. bis 12. Jahrhundert," in *Bonifatius in Mainz*, ed. Barbara Nichtweiß (Mainz: 2005), 55–238. In the latter part of the 18th century, particularly during Napoleon's rule, Boniface was overshadowed by Martin and others, until his "restoration" in 1855 by Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz; Barbara Nichtweiß, "Bonifatius-Verehrung in Mainz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Bonifatius in Mainz*, ed. Barbara Nichtweiß (Mainz: 2005), 277–92.

12 Nichtweiß, "Zur Bonifatius-Verehrung im Mainz," 277, 283–86.

That resurgence of interest in Boniface is evidenced by the construction of monuments, a significant increase in publications about the saint,[13] and the growing number of new churches named for Boniface. Ludwig I's construction of the St Boniface' abbey and basilica in Munich (founded 1835[14]), with its series of frescoes by Heinrich von Hess depicting the life of Boniface, is indicative of the saint's role in reasserting a German Catholic identity.[15] Fulda's Boniface statue, erected in the 1830s, likewise shows his status as a national saint at that time.[16] Siegfried Weichlein describes in this volume how the Boniface of the early 19th century was an interdenominational "hero of anti-revolutionary Christianity," and elsewhere posits that Boniface, in the 19th and still in the 20th century, provided the answer to some fundamental questions – about what Germany is, and what counts as German, when Germany came to be, what keeps Germany (and Europe) together.[17]

A particularly important statement of both Catholic identity and anxiety was the founding of the *Bonifatius-Verein*, or Boniface Association, in 1849. The Reformation had left pockets of Catholic Germans without parochial support or even churches, and the association aimed to replicate the missionary work of Boniface for Catholic minorities in majority-Protestant areas.[18] In doing so, the Boniface Association employed a figure who stood for German and Catholic identity; ironically, within a few years that same figure would symbolize the confessional division of Germany.

The 1855 anniversary celebrations were simultaneously a highpoint of the cult and a signal that Boniface's universal acceptance as a unifying figure was

13 Ludwig Lenhart, "Die Bonifatius-Renaissance des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zur zwölfhunderdsten Todestag*, eds. Cuno Raabe et al. (Fulda: 1954), 155–79; Rudolf Schieffer, "Bonifatius-Literatur des 19. Jahrhundert," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken,* eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 363–73.

14 For the history of the basilica and abbey, see Brigitta Klemenz and Peter Pfister (eds.), *Lebendige Steine: St Bonifaz in München* (Munich: 2000).

15 The frescoes were destroyed in World War II along with the basilica. Extensive description in Klemenz and Pfister, *Lebendige Steine*, 76–7 and 128–34.

16 Werner Kirchhoff, "Das Bonifatiusdenkmal in Fulda: Ein verkanntes Nationaldenkmal?," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Petersberg: 2004), 235–50.

17 Weichlein, "Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger," 67–82.

18 Later it was spelled as one word, *Bonifatiusverein*; I will use the English "Boniface Association." It is still active, now under the name *Bonifatiuswerk der deutschen Katholiken*, and expanded its scope in the 1970s to include Scandinavia, and in the 1990s to include the Baltic states. Giovanni Lajolo, "Grußwort," in *Diaspora: Zeugnis von Christen für Christen; 150 Jahre Bonifatiuswerk der deutschen Katholiken*, eds. Günter Rißе and Clemens A. Kathke (Paderborn: 1999), 15–6.

over.[19] A commemorative volume from the festivities in Mainz shows that the local government supported the celebration, and that Catholics wanted to show that Boniface still stood for a unified Germany;[20] the events confirmed the 19th-century turn toward a more popularized religion, with a closer connection between the lay population and the church hierarchy.[21] But during those celebrations, ultramontanist Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler of Mainz[22] turned exaggerated historical praise into partisan rhetoric, and combined a classic antisemitic trope with contemporary anti-Protestantism: as the Jews lost their purpose on earth when they crucified the Messiah, he said, so did the Germans lose their purpose when the Reformation fractured their faith.[23] Though von Ketteler claimed that a renewed interest in Boniface should bring Germany back to its origins and strengthen it as a nation, his comments proved that Boniface was no longer an interdenominational father figure for all of Germany.

Bismarck's German Empire displaced Boniface: Luther was now the Protestants' only German apostle and Boniface veneration became a more tribalized phenomenon. Protestant politicians and historians could claim that the German Empire was essentially Protestant, that the Franco-Prussian war was "a final victory for German Protestantism over German Catholicism."[24] Winfried Müller situates the Bonifacian cult of this period in its competition with Luther, and reiterates that Boniface became a central figure for Catholics in a process of "nation building."[25] Church dedications provide an easily quantifiable indicator of religious politics. According to Jürgen Krüger, church dedications

19 Werner Kathrein, "Zur Bonifatiusverehrung in Fulda seit dem 16. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 57 (2005), 133–57.

20 Bonifatius Gams, "Die Theilname des Volkes an dem Bonifaciusfeste in Mainz," in *Die eilfte Säcularfeier des Martyrertodes des heiligen Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen, in Fulda und Mainz, vollständig geschildert mit den dabei gehaltenen Predigten, theils wörtlich, theils im Auszuge* (Mainz: 1855), 96–101.

21 Herman-Josef Braun, "Die Bonifatius-Jubiläen im Bistum Mainz," in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, 131–54.

22 Haarländer, "Zur Bonifatius-Verehrung im Mainz," 280, 283–85.

23 Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, "Hirtenbrief des hochwerdigen Herrn Wilhelm Emmanuel, Bischofs des hl. Stuhles von Mainz," *Die eilfte Säcularfeier des Martyrertodes des heiligen Bonifacius, des Apostels der Deutschen, in Fulda und Mainz, vollständig geschildert mit den dabei gehaltenen Predigten, theils wörtlich, theils im Auszuge* (Mainz: *1855*), 7–21.

24 Stan M. Landry, "That All May Be One?: Church Unity and the German National Idea, 1866–1883," *Church History* 80, no. 2 (2011), 283–85. Landry notes that German Catholics were referred to as "France within Germany."

25 Winfried Müller, "Jubiläen und Heiligengedenken: Von den mittelalterlichen Ursprüngen bis zum Heiligenkult des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, 115–30.

to Boniface were more or less explicitly directed against Luther after 1883, the 400th anniversary of Luther's birth,[26] an anniversary (described by one historian as a "belated birthday for the new German Reich") which celebrated Luther more "as a German national hero than a religious figure."[27]

Protestant scholars and clergy particularly opposed the ultramontanist strain in contemporary Catholicism, at the same time that Catholic imagery and descriptions of Boniface played up his Roman orientation. Practically all German prayer cards from this era depict him in the regalia of a bishop (as in figure 18.1), and Protestant critics made the most of this. August Werner's 1875 biography of Boniface, for instance, is subtitled "die Romanisierung von Mitteleuropa," "the Romanization of Central Europe," a term that Werner meant pejoratively. Nowhere is Boniface's polarizing quality clearer than in the work of August Ebrard, a Protestant theologian who in 1873 posited that long before Boniface ever came to Germany, it had been converted by Celtic ("Iroschottisch") missionaries, who built a "pure" church which strongly resembled Luther's Evangelical Protestant church. Ebrard claimed that this church was subsequently destroyed by Boniface and his henchmen, who brought the German *Landeskirche* under Roman control,[28] a myth that still proved viable in the 1930s. Under such attacks, Catholics dug in their heels: their Boniface remained the stern, combative, Rome-oriented bishop of the renaissance of the early 19th century,[29] and he wouldn't change significantly until the next century.

In the work of Germany's late 19th-century historians, however, the interpretation of Boniface changed considerably. A more equitable assessment of Boniface was published in (Protestant) Albert Hauck's important *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* (1887–1920). It provided the direction for all future Boniface studies, and offered an evaluation based very much on the sources, with little parochial or denominational interpretation – the source-based writing of history championed by Leopold von Ranke (Hauck's professor in Berlin) had finally entered religious historiography.[30] The *Festgabe* published in Fulda

26 Jürgen Krüger, "Bonifatiuskirchen im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar*, 251–62.

27 Landry, "That All May Be One?," 291–92.

28 Johann Heinrich August Ebrard, *Die iroschottische Missionskirche des sechsten, siebenten und achten Jahrhunderts, und ihre Verbreitung und Bedeutung auf dem Festland* (Gütersloh: 1873).

29 Sometimes Boniface cutting the Donar Oak aimed at contemporary politics, when the tree he cuts down is the "Liberty Tree" of the French Revolution; Weichlein, "Bonifatius als politischer Heiliger," 223.

30 The importance of Hauck's work is attested widely, for instance in Schieffer, "Bonifatius-Literatur," 372–73; and in the epilogue of Manfred Weitlauff's 2004 reprint of Joseph Bern-

for the Boniface Jubilee of 1905 in no way resembles the 1855 commemorative book from Mainz: the 1905 book is a scholarly volume with contributions by Gregor Richter (on the Fulda cathedral) and Carl Scherer (on the codices associated with Boniface).[31] Influenced by Hauck's historiography, it deliberately steers clear of confessional conflict, as does Levison's 1905 edition of the vitae, seminal for Boniface studies.[32] The celebration on the whole appears to have been a relatively minor affair, taking place mostly in Fulda,[33] with very little change in the iconography used to represent the saint. A coin struck for the occasion for Fulda shows an elderly bishop with miter and crozier, standing next to a tree stump, holding up a crozier. Other materials confirm the traditionality of the imagery, and a postcard from 1910, from the Boniface Association in Prague, confirms ongoing ultramontanism.[34]

2.2 *Boniface in the Nazi Era*

In the Nazi era, the targeting of German youth by Hitler's mass organizations may have prompted Catholics to a kind of saintly rejuvenation: suddenly one finds more images of a younger Boniface, younger than even middle age, who seems purposely tailored to a younger audience – one may well wonder whether this shift toward youth and vigor is influenced by Nazi aesthetics. A notable, early iteration of this Boniface dates from 1924; it is a black and white drawing by Rudolf Offermann (Image 18.2) in the printed program for the third conference of the *Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands*, which met in Fulda at the end of June 1923. The conference's goal was to unite all Catholic youth organizations in an atmosphere of increasing nationalism.[35] Boniface could be extremely useful in this context, which is why we find a

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hart's 1950 biography; in *Bonifatius 672/75–754, Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. Manfred Weitlauff (Weißenhorn: 2004), 267–305.

31 Gregor Richter and Carl Scherer, eds., *Festgabe zum Bonifatius-Jubiläum 1905* (Fulda: 1905).

32 Wilhelm Levison (ed.), *Vitae sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini*, MGH SRG 57 (Hanover: 1905).

33 Though it could have been disastrous: a fire caused by processional fireworks destroyed the north tower of Fulda's cathedral; see Kathrein, "Zur Bonifatiusverehrung in Fulda," 154.

34 There is barely any evidence of these celebrations in the form of material articles (prayer cards, booklets, trinkets); I have found only postcards and the one coin.

35 One of the questions to be discussed at the conference was the congregation's stance toward the *Jungdo*, the *Jungdeutsche Orden*, a nationalist right-wing oriented organization founded by young veterans from World War 1 and growing in strength in the 1920s; see "Anträge an den Verbandstag," *Dritter Verbandstag der Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: 1924), 19–31. The love of people and country is taken as a given throughout the questions prepared for the participants, but "people and state" should not be made into idols, according to discussion and questions prepared by Emil

IMAGE 18.2 Image of Boniface by Rudolf Offermann, *Dritter Verbandstag der Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands* (Düsseldorf: Verbandszentrale des Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmännervereine Deutschlands, 1924)

starkly drawn younger saint in simple (monastic?) garb, again reminiscent of the Fulda statue, with rays of light (resembling electric bolts) emanating from the cross he holds up. In 1920s Weimar Germany, Catholic youth organizations seem to waver in how they rank their commitment to church and country: the initial statement of their goals first identifies Catholic youth with the church, only then with the state, but a later formulation of their central tenets starts, "Wir sind jung, – wir sind Jugend des deutschen Volkes, – wir sind katholische Jugend" ("We are young, we are the youth of the German people, we are Catholic youth"), placing country before church. The more youthful image of the saint continues to influence the course of future iconography. Later images by such artists as Augustin Kolb (1862–1942; Image 18.3) and Ludwig Barth (1898–1983) follow this pattern: in general, from the 1930s on, artists represent Boniface as a more vigorous and much younger man actively preaching and baptizing rather than passively being martyred.

The historical positivism of Hauck and his followers possibly masks the continued survival of more populist and antagonistic strains – ultramontanism continued to be expressed, but so did the anti-Boniface sentiment among at least some Protestants. The Nazis, who saw any loyalty to Rome as antipatriotic, employed Ebrard's anti-Bonifatian "Iroschottisch" perspective to directly counter Boniface, essentially reiterating the argument of the *Kulturkampf* but now with a stronger state apparatus behind it. Nazi author Otto Wissig, a Protestant parson and amateur historian, reiterated the claim that Boniface's orientation toward Rome perverted German Christianity.[36] While more serious historians criticized the thesis,[37] this account of Boniface embedded as a foreign agent in a "real" Germany struck a nerve.[38] The most extreme condemnation of Boniface came from Robert Luft, who in *Die Verchristung*

Ritter (1881–1968), a Catholic publicist and later close associate of Franz von Papen; "Leitsätze für die Arbeitsgruppen," *Dritter Verbandstag*, 31–3.

36 *Wynfried-Bonifatius: Ein Charakterbild nach seinen Briefen gezeichnet* (Gütersloh: 1929), and *Iroschotten und Bonifatius in Deutschland: Eine kirchengeschichtliche urkundliche Untersuchung* (Gütersloh: 1932). See Siegfried Weichlein, "'Meine Peitsche ist die Feder': Populäre katholische Geschichtsschreibung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Geschichte für Leser: populäre Geschichtsschreibung in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfgang Hardtwig, Erhard H. Schütz, and Ernst Wolfgang Becker (Stuttgart: 2005), 227–58.

37 Wilhelm Levison, "Rev. of Wissig, Wynfrid-Bonifatius," *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 3.3 (1932), 850–51; also Hanns Rückert, "Bonifatius und die Iroschotten: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Ebrard und Wissig, pt. 1," *Deutsche Theologie* 1 (1934), 341–57, 381–95.

38 The same basic thesis is reiterated based on scant evidence in Heinrich Voigt, "Von der iroschottischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen und Bonifatius' Verhältnis zu ihr," in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 103 (1931), 252–84. See also Friedrich Schick, *Bonifatius im Kampf gegen die iroschottische Kirche in Deutschland* (Berlin: 1934).

IMAGE 18.3 Boniface by Augustin Kolb (1869–1942), reprinted in Dr. Unwander, *Der heilige Bonifatius, Apostel der Deutschen* (Christkönigsverlag vom Weißen Kreuz, Meitingen bei Augsburg, 1962)

der Deutschen (1937) portrayed him as one of the agents of a genocide perpetrated on the German people.[39]

The anti-Catholic views of the Nazis influenced the representation of Boniface at Fulda as well. Boniface, the city's main tourist attraction, was typically featured on the cover of guides and tourist brochures, but in the 1930s he would be partly disappeared from Fulda's history, as in a 1939 tourist booklet on Fulda that starts Fulda's history before Boniface, practically skips him, then focuses on the city's Baroque treasures.[40] The cover of a 1937 booklet published by the Kurhessen tourist bureau features the Flora vase, an almost seven-meter-tall statue from 1728 representing the pagan goddess Flora, in front of a Baroque palace, the Orangerie. Fulda now is "Die Stadt des deutschen Barocks" ("the city of German baroque"). The booklet makes explicit that the history of Fulda began long before Boniface and Sturm, as was claimed in the archeological studies done by Fulda's Prof. Joseph Vonderau (1863–1951), the local historian for whom Fulda's historical museum is named, and whose work served the Nazis well. This work of propaganda presents Boniface's time as but one of three glorious periods in Fulda history: the Baroque period is the second, and the Nazi period the third.[41]

Fulda's 1200th anniversary took place in 1944, and Boniface was downplayed once again. The official celebratory book, *1200 Jahre Fulda*, essentially amplifies the aforementioned booklet and is dedicated to Fulda's honorary citizens, which include Hitler and Gauleiter of Hessen Karl Weinrich as well as Professor Vonderau. Weinrich's preface mentions Hitler, not Boniface, and implores the reader to see the history of Germany and its "divine mission" reflected in Fulda's past and present.[42] Author and editor Karl Maurer's overview of Fulda devotes more space to Fulda's prehistory and Baroque period than to Boniface and Sturm.[43] The Flora vase – not Boniface – now represents Fulda; it did so

39 Robert Luft, *Die Goten unter dem Kreuz* (Leipzig: 1937) and *Die Verchristung der Deutschen* (1937, repr. 1992).

40 Joseph Theele and Ludwid Deubner, eds, *Fulda: Ein Stadtbild* (Munich: 1939).

41 Paul Zimmer (ed.), *Fulda: Die Stadt des deutschen Barocks* (Kassel: 1937).

42 The book's apparatus proves the complete complicity of all the city's institutions, including Hesse's *Landesbibliothek*, the tourist agency, the museums, the local printshop and book artists. The only entity missing is the church.

43 Karl Maurer, *1200 Jahre Fulda* (Fulda: 1944). Maurer (1890–1975) was a historian and politician who had held office locally for the Social-Democratic party; he had been a prisoner of war in Russia in World War I, and was the director of the Vonderau Museum in Fulda during the war years. From 1936 until his death in 1975 he was director of a museum in Lauterbach, near Fulda.

IMAGE 18.4A German stamp for Fulda's 1200th anniversary, 1944

also on the commemorative stamp issued by the German postal service.[44] The section "National-Socialist Fulda" gives a hagiographic account of Hitler's rise to power (he is silently allegorized on the next page by a black and white photograph of Apollo as the sun god, on the ceiling of the Orangerie). It portrays the rise of the Nazi party in Fulda as mirroring the recent history of Germany, from a few NSDAP leaders in the 1920s to the party's assumption of power in January 1933, capped by a torchlight march through the city. Maurer adds that

44 By the time the stamp was issued, the vase was no longer visible to the public, having been walled in to protect it from Allied bombs; Franz Tröger, "Die Propaganda und die Vielen: Briefmarken in der politischen Kommunikation des NS-Staates," in *Gezähnte Geschichte: Die Briefmarke als historische Quelle*, eds. Pierre Smolarski, René Smolarski, and Silke Vetter-Schultheiß, vol. 1 (Göttingen: 2018), 399–422.

IMAGE 18.4B German stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954

local companies fired their Jewish employees, and proclaims a Fulda unified through antisemitic exclusion: Hitler has replaced Boniface as a guarantor of German unity. By 1944, everyone knew the war was already lost, but Fulda's citizens, the author maintains, believe in the final victory, and the only altar mentioned in this section is that of the Fatherland, on which the price for Germany's victory is paid in blood.[45]

45 One of the copies I have of the book has pages 47–50 simply cut out, in a revision of revisionism. The chapter on Nazi history is reprinted in Bernhard Opfermann, *Das Bistum Fulda im Dritten Reich* (Fulda: 1987), 30–3.

IMAGE 18.4C Dutch stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954

When the city held its official festivities in March, practically every single public event involved the SA (*Sturmabteilung*, the paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party), including the SA orchestra, and there were public lectures by SA Standartenführer Wolrad Prinz zu Schaumburg-Lippe and by Edmund Stengel, member of the Nazi party since 1937 and president of the Monumenta Germaniae Historica from 1937 to 1942. The diocese celebrated Fulda's anniversary during "Boniface week" in June 1944; they were not allowed to publish a *Festschrift* or have any processions or public celebrations, ostensibly for safety reasons. In what was either a low-key and lackluster defense or an obvious attempt at accommodation, the various speeches over three days went to great lengths to argue that Boniface was not looking to build a Rome-dependent church, and that the Catholic Church and "Germanism" were not at odds, but rather strengthened each other. Wilhelm Neuss, priest and theologian from

IMAGE 18.4D Vatican City stamp for the 1200th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 1954

IMAGE 18.4E German stamp for the 1250th anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, 2004

Bonn, posited Boniface as essentially a co-founder of the Carolingian empire, and thus the later German empire, and thus his contemporary Germany.[46] Fulda had been effectively co-opted by the Nazis, and Boniface was either disappeared or made to accommodate, as much as possible, the Germany of Hitler.

2.3 *The Post-war Period and the 1954 Celebrations*

In post-war Germany millions of displaced people were rebuilding lives, homes, and churches. German Catholics had to deal with the division between East and West and the suppression of religious belief in the German Democratic Republic. The Boniface Association responded to the changes by publishing a new handbook for its members in 1953, especially clergymen: the *Handbuch des Bonifatiusvereins* outlined the new geopolitical situation for Catholics and offered guidelines and advice to clergy and lay organizations. Refugees came from all remnants of the former Third Reich; the diocese of Meissen, for instance, already a diaspora area, saw its membership increase

IMAGE 18.5
Josef Plum, "Sanct Bonifatius unterstützt den Wiederaufbau," German prayer card from the series *Mainzer Heilige vorgestellt in den Werken der Barmherzigkeit* (Mainz: 1949)

46 Opfermann, *Das Bistum Fulda*, 20–33.

from 205,000 to 594,000.[47] Aiming for a conciliatory tone, the new handbook barely discusses the suppression of faith in the GDR or the reality of the new border.[48] There is no explicit discussion of what position Catholics ought to take in relation to the Socialist government, or how that government's measures affected, for instance, Catholic priests and education.

The poverty, dislocation, and trauma of post-war Germany is reflected in a series of 14 cards of saints related to Mainz, drawn by Josef Plum and published in 1949 (Image 18.5). Boniface stands in front of a row of buildings under construction, with the caption "Sanct Bonifatius unterstützt den Wiederaufbau" ("Saint Boniface supports the reconstruction").[49] Caritas, a Catholic aid organization, printed the series to raise funds, and it presents touching images: on plain brown paper, the saints are drawn in black ink, while the saints' names and background imagery are in red. For Saint Bardo, for instance, who aids victims of war, two distinctly drawn amputees look up at the saint; the fourteen cards offer a panorama of post-war misery and reconstruction. Boniface to some extent presides over the other saints – his support of the reconstruction is the only general and abstract task, where all the other saints have specific missions such as burying the dead, visiting the sick, and looking for missing persons. Moreover, he is depicted traditionally, as a bishop with a crozier and the pierced book – and as the only saint unaccompanied by victims of war.

Despite the fairly traditional Boniface of the Caritas cards, there is evidence that a younger saint gained a foothold in Germany. Compare, for instance, membership cards for the Boniface Association. These typically featured a single image of Boniface on the front, and a prayer or short biography on the back or the inside. A representative card from the late 1800s has the well-known old,

47 *Handbuch des Bonifatiusvereins* (Paderborn: 1953), 40.

48 The only mention of the border, as "Zonengrenze" for the "Ostzone," is on page 31.

49 The general trend in the 19th and 20th centuries toward increased Marian veneration, following the impetus provided by Pius X and Pius XII, progressed at the expense of Boniface and other saints. The Virgin Mary, during a period of nationalization and secularization, became instrumental in the construction of a "national Catholic ideology" in Western European countries which was, in some cases, "decisive in the construction of the Nation, the State, and the contemporary Catholic Church," as noted by Roberto Di Stefano and Francisco Javier Ramón Solans, "Introduction," in *Marian Devotions, Political Mobilization, and Nationalism in Europe and America*, eds. Roberto Di Stefano and Francisco Javier Ramón Solans (Springer: 2016), 1–26, at 5. For Boniface this is seen, for instance, in the official publication of the 72nd German Catholics Day, held in Mainz in 1948 (for the first time since 1932): Mary is the only religious figure invoked in the booklet, in a plea for the neutral status of Jerusalem. Zentralkomitee zur Vorbereitung der Generalversammlungen der Katholiken Deutschlands, *Nicht Klagen, Handeln! Entschließungen der Vertretertagung des Mainzer Katholikentages 1948* (Paderborn: 1948), 54.

IMAGE 18.6A Membership card of the Boniface Association, late 1800s

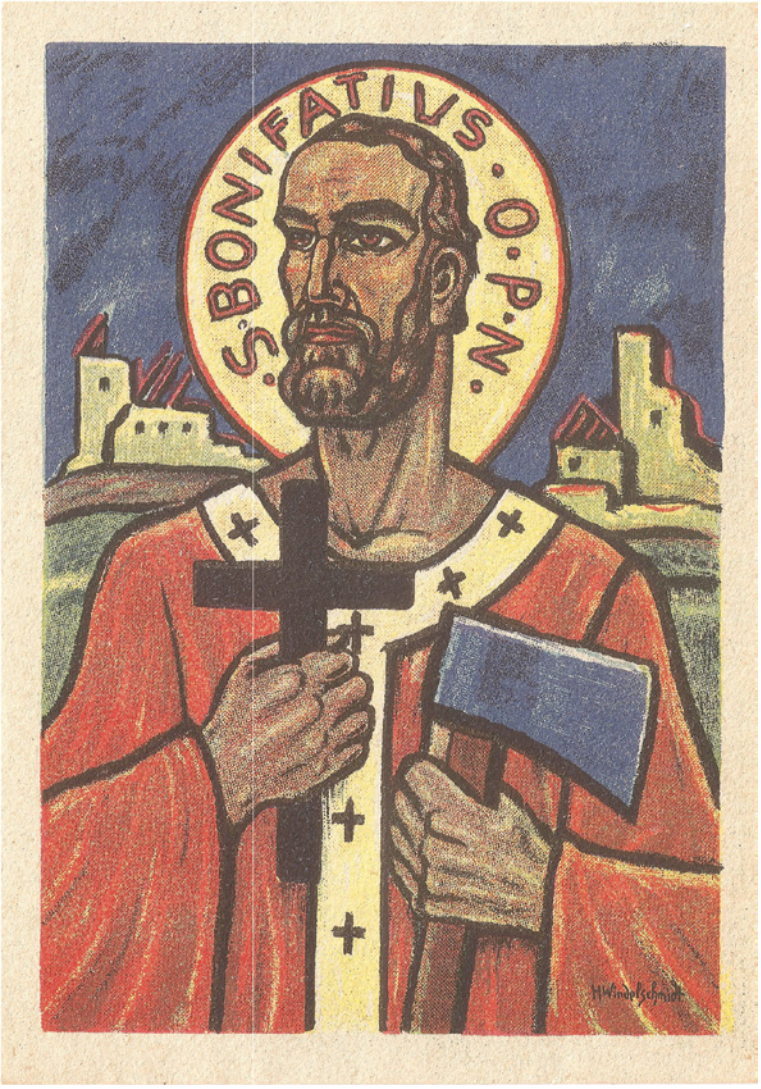

IMAGE 18.6B Membership card of the Boniface Association, 1949

static Boniface with all the episcopal regalia, looking up at a radiance of light; the man is a saint already, his earthly work done (Image 18.6A). In contrast, a card from 1949 presents a younger Boniface, with a cross in one hand and an axe in the other (Image 18.6B). While he wears an ecclesiastical robe, his head is bare and he lacks all other common elements – there is no crozier, no gospel, no dagger. In the background is a church under construction, a conventional

image that acquires a practical immediacy in 1949 amid German reconstruction efforts.

The political situations of Germany and Fulda shed additional light on three Boniface celebrations in 1954: a Boniface feast in Erfurt in May, the Boniface anniversary in June in Fulda, and the German *Katholikentag*, the usually biannual celebration of the German Catholic laity, in September, also in Fulda. After the war the Fulda diocese was cut in half, with the city of Fulda on the Western side of the border; Erfurt, where Boniface established a bishopric in 742, was on the Eastern side. Thousands of US troops were based in Fulda, with Observation Post Alpha, overlooking the Fulda Gap, some ten miles east of the city, which was the likely entrance into the West German heartland for Soviet tanks. For the Fulda celebrations, one of the goals was to pull in as many East German Catholics as possible without upsetting the East German government. Curiously, these gatherings were enabled in part by both countries desiring further unification, no matter how differently they envisioned this. The GDR was actively and increasingly repressing religion,[50] but saw in the celebrations an opportunity to promote its ideals, which included German unity, in agreement with the Soviet overlord.[51]

For the Boniface celebration in Erfurt at the end of May 1954, Germany's papal nuncio, the American Aloisius Joseph Muench, was allowed to travel to Erfurt and celebrate Mass, accompanied by West German prelates including the bishop of Fulda, Johann Baptist Dietz. Muench had to sign a written statement that he represented the entirety of Germany (effectively denying the post-war division), and dignitaries were to refrain from political speech. Any protest against the situation of Catholics in East Germany had to be delivered indirectly, and it came by way of celebrating a very traditional, Rome-bound Boniface (remember that ten years earlier accommodation in the Nazi period led to a downplaying of the Roman connection), who in effect denied the legitimacy of the East German government. Erfurt teacher Karl Böhmer, in

50 In early 1954 the East German government secretly circulated a memorandum proclaiming that Protestant and Catholic Churches were collaborating with the US and West Germany in an attempt to start a new world war which would disrupt East German progress. Political agitation and repression of public expressions of religion, including education, soon followed. Matthias Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr 1954 im allgemeinpolitischen und gesamtkirchlichen Kontext 393–94," in *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007), 375–410.

51 The so-called Stalin Note of 1952 had proposed a unified, neutral Germany, which was to remain outside of NATO; at the Berlin Conference, January-February 1954, German unification couldn't be agreed on either, but the thought of unification was very much in the air.

obvious allegory, spoke of Boniface's struggle against the "degenerate" Frankish state-run church; Bishop Dietz and Erfurt professor Joseph Klapper spoke at length about Boniface's founding a church for all Germans based on strict obedience to Rome – all thinly-veiled criticisms of the East German government's religious politics and official atheism. Matthias Pape notes that this veiled critique resembles the way the Church had acted early under the Nazi regime. Over 60,000 people participated in the procession,[52] but as far as I know the celebrations in East Germany did not lead to any celebratory volumes, feast plays, or memorabilia.

Celebrations in Fulda were extensive and, as they were in Erfurt, guided (or tempered) also by political concerns. Three thousand believers from East Germany were allowed to attend, mingling with 120,000 others.[53] The commemorative volume *Gaude Fulda!* shows photographs of East German Catholics crossing the border (tightened after 1952) and being welcomed and fed by West Germans; in essence, it portrays a victorious and confident German Christianity that utters its strength in a Europe whose unity it now actively promotes. European unity is the most obvious strain throughout the celebrations in Germany (and the Netherlands): Boniface stands (with Charlemagne and the Franks) at the foundation of Europe, at a time when a renewed Western Europe, supported by America and unified also by NATO, was to guarantee long-lasting peace. This confidence was in part wishful thinking: secularization was on the rise, the Protestant and Catholic Churches remained as distant as they had ever been,[54] and the oppression in East Germany put a considerable strain on the resources of the Church and the Boniface Association.

These considerations and the political machinations that were necessary to celebrate Boniface in Erfurt set aside, the 1954 celebrations seemed a success. Certainly the turnout in Fulda was impressive: 60,000 people gathered to hear the service in front of the cathedral, where German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, a devout Catholic, noted that the communal spirit of Europe found its

52 Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr 1954," 398–400. In July of the same year, the East German government allowed the Protestant Church to hold its Kirchentag in Leipzig, where 50,000 East Germans and 10,000 West Germans attended. For the final event, the Soviet commissioner had allowed the use of the Leipzig Messehalle, the large convention hall, and no fewer than 650,000 attended; Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr 1954," 395–96.

53 Pape, "Das Bonifatius-Gedenkjahr 1954," 401.

54 Julia von Massow, a Lutheran (who became Catholic in 1885) and founder of an organization that aimed to heal the schism, prayed in 1883, the year of the Luther anniversary, at the grave of Boniface that "all may be one" – to no avail; see Manfred Fleischer, "Lutheran and Catholic Reunionists in the Age of Bismarck," *Church History* 38.1 (1969), 43–66; Landry, "That All May Be One?," 298–300.

predecessor in Boniface. Adenauer stated he came to Fulda "als katholischer Christ, als Deutscher und Europäer" ("as a Catholic Christian, as German and European"),[55] adding that he saw Boniface's work as a guideline for the reconstruction of Germany.[56] Apparently, when the chancellor uttered the word "Europäer," the audience consented loudly, indicating the extent to which the European thought was already alive among the people in a divided Germany, not merely an abstract idea propagated by politicians.[57] Fulda's bishop Eduard Schick compares the celebrations in 1755, 1855, and 1905, remarking how the Boniface anniversaries expanded in sphere, going from a celebration held mainly in Fulda and only for Catholics in 1755, to a "gesamtdeutsches" event in 1855, and finally to an international event in 1905. In his enthusiasm, he somewhat overstates the extent of the 1905 celebrations, but his general outline is correct, and he notes how in 1954, as proven by the chancellor's words and the presence of many foreign guests, the occasion became a celebration of Europeanness.[58] It also came with all the paraphernalia – the German postal service issued a (very traditional) commemorative stamp (Image 18.4B), Josef Wehner wrote a *Festspiel* which was produced in Fulda,[59] prayer cards and other printed keepsakes were widely distributed.[60] On the final day, 150,000 spectators witnessed the procession of the relics, and so came to a close two weeks of celebrations that, while they lasted, united the Fulda diocese, the countries of Western Europe, and to some extent East and West Germany.

The 1954 anniversary prompted an increase in Boniface scholarship as well. The *St. Bonifatius Gedenkgabe*, published in Fulda, contains almost thirty articles (a few in English and French) by some of the biggest names in scholarship. That same year Theodor Schieffer published his monumental Boniface

55 Ludwig Pralle, ed., *Gaude Fulda!: Das Bonifatiusjahr 1954, Ein Erinnerungsbuch* (Fulda: 1954), 59.

56 According to Eduard Schick, "Das Bonifatiusjubiläum 1954: Rückschau und Würdigung," *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 30 (1954), 159.

57 Schick, "Das Bonifatiusjubiläum," 160.

58 Schick cites many of the officials who spoke on the theme of Europe, and some of the newspaper reports about events in Fulda, which all confirm that Boniface is an apostle of Europe who, according to a headline in the London Catholic Herald, "unites the nations" ("Das Bonifatiusjubiläum," 163).

59 Joseph Magnus Wehner, *Das Fuldaer Bonifatiusspiel* (Fulda: 1954).

60 Cards from a full-color series by E. Seeger were printed for Easter services in various churches throughout West Germany, sometimes on glossy paper. Another set was printed more cheaply, on cheaper paper and with only one color besides black, in Heiligenstadt in East Germany. Many other individual cards circulated, as well as postcards. In Erfurt a set of commemorative photographs was sold, Hameln had a coin minted. The Boniface Association published a set of commemorative stamps, with the saint in episcopal vestments in front of Fulda Cathedral.

biography, whose very subtitle ("die Christliche Grundlegung Europas") also pointed toward European unification.[61] In all, there were at least a hundred books and publications in academic journals, and there was broad interest from more popular media as well. The assessment of Boniface, as a person, a missionary, a reformer had definitively acquired a more scholarly, less confessional character. The years since 1954 have seen a steady growth in scholarship, even as ongoing secularization has decreased the public footprint of Boniface.

2.4 *2004 Celebrations and Recent Developments*

Much changed after 1954, with secularization being the most important factor affecting religious life in Europe. Generally speaking, the cults of Boniface and other saints became increasingly limited to the devout and lost their importance to the larger population. As a result, the cult (and the church) have adapted to recreate Boniface as a saint who is at once more individual and more ecumenical – contemporary veneration of Boniface sees him more as an individual like us, meaning also he is less Roman, less austere, less authoritative than before, as various aspects of the 2004 celebrations suggest. He becomes a man less sure about his faith and his role, and in some representations he is changed almost unrecognizably from the Boniface of previous generations.

Some curious excremental language in a feast play for the 2004 celebrations in Fulda, *Bonifatius lebt* ("Boniface lives"), shows that those promoting the cult went to great lengths in an attempt to connect with a modern, likely secular audience. Fulda pastor Winfried Abel's play focuses on the conflict between Boniface and Milo,[62] and aims to prove that Boniface is still alive in many ways. Two allegorized characters in medieval garb open the play. Angelus, who stands for spirituality, claims Boniface indeed continues to be efficacious; his opponent, Zeitgeist, who represents a lazy, materialistic, and secularized German population, denies this. When the play moves to Reims in Boniface's time, we see that Zeitgeist mirrors the town's cynical population, disenchanted with their church hierarchy, personified by the corrupt Milo, whom Boniface will depose. Abel's use of the vernacular (the play features a number of vernacular

61 When Adenauer spoke in Fulda in May, he could still expect full ratification of the European Defence Community, which would have created a pan-European army, but the treaty failed when the French did not ratify it in August. The Treaty of Paris (1951), which included Germany and France, however, had paved the way for European unification, and the Treaty of Rome (1957) would lay the European Union's foundation.

62 A contemporary touch is that Abel explicitly has Milo become Archbishop of Reims because he helped Charles Martel defeat the Muslim force in 732 – before 9/11 Boniface was not often connected to Islam.

"corrections" of church Latin by the cynical citizens) is a nod to modernity, and the play is littered with scatological humours. Zeitgeist refers to Fulda as "ein mit Gesangbüchern zugedeckter, stinkender Haufen Mist," or "a steaming heap of dung covered with hymnals,"[63] and a rich merchant of Reims in Boniface's time condemns a chaplain's Latinity as "latrinity, in good German, a bunch of shit."[64] In the same act, a citizen of Reims updates an old pun on Boniface – the Bonifacius/Malefacius pun was well known throughout the Early Modern period[65]– but Abel introduces "Bonifurzius," "Furz" being German for "fart."[66]

The play is set in Fritzlar and Reims and striking is the absence of Boniface himself from the play; only his clothes are presented, after his martyrdom. Abel explains in the preface that he wished to avoid the usual clichés about the saint (the pierced book, the axe, the Donar Oak); the point is that even an absent saint is never absent and still works on in the world, if we let him; the play ends by repeating (not in Latin, but in German) the phrase on the Fulda statue, "Verbum Domini manet in aeternum," "Gottes Word bleibt allezeit."[67] God's word may be eternal, but the language of shit, farts, and dung in a play about Saint Boniface would have been unthinkable in 1954 or before.

On a completely different scale was *Bonifatius – Das Musical*. Abel's play was staged in a small church in Fulda-Neuenberg, across the river Fulda, but this opera was a grand production in the heart of the city. First performed on 3 June 2004 and sponsored by local companies and the city of Fulda, it was reprised many times, including in Bremen and Erfurt. Four shows were planned in Fulda for 2019. As with the feast play, considerable liberties are taken; one of the focal points is an illicit romance between Sturm and a young woman. Boniface's death is the result of a conspiracy between Gewilib, Bishop of Mainz, and Frisian king Radbod; as in the feast play, the populace protests a corrupt clergy. The central image of the musical is that of a very young Boniface modeled after the Fulda statue (open book in left hand, cross in the right) but in a perspective that makes him push the cross in the viewer's face, so to speak (Image 18.7). It seems like a development of the aforementioned pre-World War II image, and is a direct effort to unsettle and disrupt, and to present a

63 Winfried Abel, *Bonifatius Lebt!: Festspiel zum 1250. Todestag des Apostels der Deutschen* (Petersberg: 2004), 8.

64 Abel, *Bonifatius Lebt!*, 37: "Deine Latinität / ist eine Latrinität, / auf Deutsch: ein Scheißdreck!"

65 It applied to, for instance, Pope Boniface VII. For our Boniface, see Thomas Heiler, "Bonifatius – Malefatius: Der Apostel der Deutschen im Licht der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen Geschichtsschreibung," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar*, 179–94.

66 Abel, *Bonifatius Lebt!*, 39.

67 Abel, *Bonifatius Lebt!*, 63.

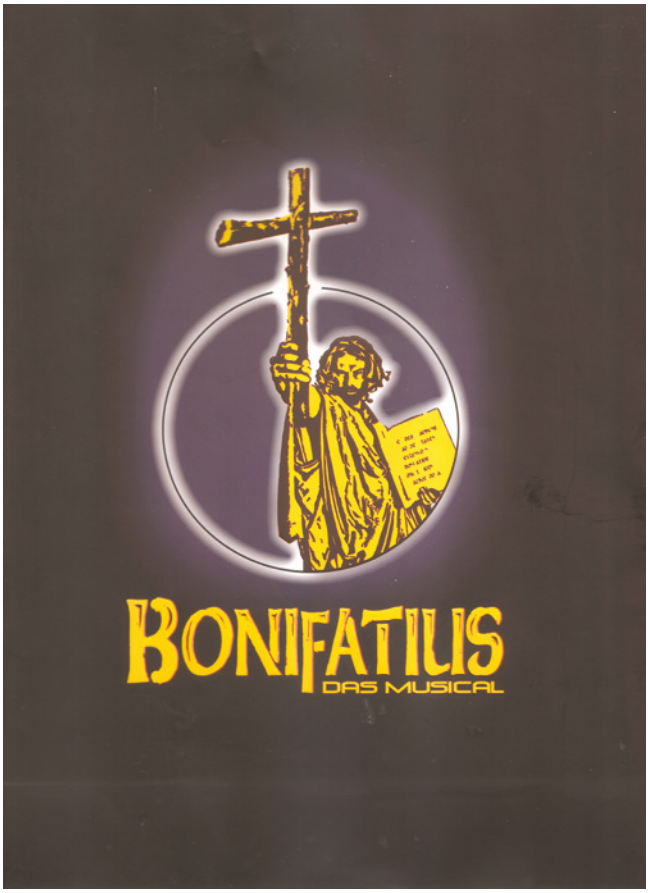

IMAGE 18.7 Logo of *Bonifatius, Das Musical* (Fulda: 2004)

young, dynamic saint who looks more like a modern Christ than the old German Boniface. This saint is made to question his life's work: in Act 1, the mother of a recent convert disrupts the ceremony to explain how the saint's Christianity disrupts their world and serves mostly to suppress the people. The corrupted church in Mainz strengthens her doubts. In Act 2, Boniface's martyrdom is staged as the result of political machinations[68] – not a new thought, but again it casts doubt on any benevolent union between church and state.[69] These elements were present also in the *Festspiel*, and below, we will find them also in the Dutch 2004 opera; the German versions, though, question Boniface and

68 "Synopsis," *Bonifatius: Das Musical* (Fulda: 2004), 6–7.

69 Johannes P. Kern, "Zum Tode des hl. Bonifatius," *Theologie und Glaube* 79 (1989), 301–21.

attempt to show him as a fallible man, but do not end on a note of doubt and despondency – Boniface's good prevails.

The speeches and other official documents of the 2004 festivities show that Boniface had regained his former status, at least among church prelates and civic leaders. Germany's president Johannes Rau places him side by side with Luther, as the first and the second apostle of Germany. Heinz Josef Algermissen, Bishop of Fulda, cites the words of his predecessor Dietz in 1954, "Bonifatius gehört Fulda, Bonifatius gehört Deutschland, Bonifatius gehört Europa" ("Boniface belongs to Fulda, to Germany, to Europe"), and finds those even more true after German unification. Cardinal Karl Lehmann argues that Boniface should be regarded less as a national than as an ecumenical figure,[70] and that Christianity, whose missionary spirit he said must be recovered, is also, or mostly, a matter of individual lay people – a thought that aligns with the 2004 musical's younger, more ordinary Boniface.[71] It is as if the Boniface of the early 19th century has returned as a rejuvenated interdenominational missionary, though now for all of Europe and without the strong connection to Rome.

Boniface's ongoing importance to historians and other scholars was proven amply by the publication of dozens of books and scholarly articles from the mid-2000s, including some important collections dealing with the saint's history and cult in Mainz[72] and in Germany,[73] conference proceedings on his role as a missionary[74] and on his entire life and afterlife,[75] new and revised biographies,[76] a study of his conception of sacrilege,[77] and the list goes on. More popular books who also propose the younger, more human, more approachable saint of the 21st century – none more so than Hubertus Lutterbach's

70 Among the speakers were a Protestant bishop, as well as the mayors of Fulda and Dokkum.

71 Preface by Rau and speeches by Algermissen, Lehmann, and others in Dieter Wagner, Werner Kathrein, and Christof Ohnesorge (eds.), *"Der Wahrheit verpflichtet": Festakt zum Bonifatius-Jubiläum am 5. Juni 2004 mit der Festrede von Kardinal Karl Lehmann* (Petersberg: 2005).

72 *Bonifatius in Mainz*, ed. Barbara Nichtweiß (Mainz: 2005).

73 *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar zum Apostel der Deutschen*, eds. Michael Imhof and Gregor K. Stasch (Petersberg: 2004).

74 *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen; Mission und Christianisierung vom 8. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Franz J. Felten (Wiesbaden: 2004).

75 *Bonifatius: Leben und Nachwirken*, eds. Franz J. Felten et al. (Mainz: 2007).

76 Joseph Bernhart, *Bonifatius: Apostel der Deutschen*, ed. Manfred Weitlauff (Weißenhorn: 2004) (revised edition of a 1950 biography); Lutz E. von Padberg, *Bonifatius: Missionar und Reformer* (Munich: 2003).

77 Michael Glatthaar, *Bonifatius und das Sakrileg: Zur politischen Dimension eines Rechtsbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: 2004).

"edition" of the correspondence, with the missing letters added through acts of creative writing. His Boniface struggles with the hierarchy, with the people, with the circumstances, with repression of sexuality – a modern man, in many ways.[78]

The 2004 celebrations and the publications that accompanied them proved that Boniface's role in the landscape has also become a serious field of interest: spirituality in an age of ongoing desecularization plays a part, coupled with a desire to rediscover the landscape's value. The 21st century has also seen the development of what can be called a spiritual eco-tourism in Europe, which brings together local and regional organizations of all kinds – civilian, governmental, religious. This interest has led to no fewer than three walking paths named for Boniface.

Boniface was always present in the German landscape, and a 2004 study by Michael Mott shows just how widespread Boniface's influence was in the naming of topographical entities: in the Fulda region, brooks, fields, crosses, hills, rock formations, and wells had elements in their names likely derived from Boniface's name. They remind us of Boniface's presence in this landscape, and of the importance of place and direction before mechanized transportation. The (real or imagined) route of Boniface's body, and the stopping places along the way, acquired meaning from the presence of the saint – though like local names for minor features of the landscapes these traditions were fragile, and many probably did not survive the 20th century.[79]

This landscape-oriented spirituality is promoted by local governments. The *Bonifatius-Route*, a walking route some 180km long between Mainz and Fulda, was conceived in 2000 as a pilgrim's route by the Catholic dioceses of Fulda, Mainz, and Limburg, the Protestant churches of Hessen-Nassau and Kurhessen-Waldeck, the cities of Fulda and Frankfurt, and five different German districts. This ecumenical group opened the route in 2004, as the reconstructed path taken by those who brought Boniface's body to Fulda. Sometimes it coincides with the original path, but the object was not to strictly follow it, which would have been difficult given all the modern obstacles. The group planned to line the route with *Blutbuche*, a variation of the European beech, which turns bright red in autumn, to symbolize Boniface's martyrdom. The oak, having fallen

78 Hubertus Lutterbach, *Bonifatius: Mit Axt und Evangelium; Eine Biographie in Briefen* (Freiburg: 2004). Reviewed in Michel Aaij, "Continental Business," *Heroic Age* 8 (2005), https://www.heroicage.org/issues/8/cb.html.

79 Michael Mott, "Der Name 'Bonifatius' in den Flurbezeichnungen," in *Bonifatius: Vom angelsäschsischen Missionar*, 195–202.

victim to Boniface's conversion efforts, was not thought a good choice.[80] A 2010 guidebook has interviews with pilgrims explaining their different motivations, from the sheer pleasure of walking to a desire for spiritual closeness to the saint, or communion with oneself. Others use the route to practice for the longer pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostella, Rome, or Jerusalem.[81]

Establishing the precise route of Boniface's body is the goal of German researcher Christian Vogel, who published a book with accompanying CD, *Bonifatiusweg*.[82] It is somewhat ironic that the accurate historical reconstruction takes one away from the former landscape, while the imaginative deviation presents the landscape as much as possible in the way Boniface and his pallbearers could have seen it. Another route, also called *Bonifatiusweg*, outlined in a long and heavily illustrated book by a German travel book publisher, was prompted by the 2004 celebrations in Fulda and subtitled "Die Wurzeln Europas entdecken" ("discovering the roots of Europe"). This *Bonifatiusweg* starts in Crediton and ends in Freising, near Munich. The book's motto is "Die besondere Kulturreise vom Abendland zum modernen Europa," but this cultural journey from the Middle Ages to modern Europe has mostly left Boniface by the wayside. Sponsors included the cities of Dokkum and Fulda and several Fulda businesses.[83] The same kind of consortium published a very nicely illustrated book on landscape features and monuments associated with Boniface in Hesse, *Zeiträume ohne Zeit*.[84]

A final ecological note concerns the oak tree, always already a special element in the German imagination which placed high value on trees.[85] Oaks called "Hermannseichen" were planted all over the country after Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, who in 1769 identified the oak with Germany in his ode

80 Ingrid Retterath, *Deutschland: Bonifatius-Route von Mainz nach Fulda* (Welver: 2010), 16–17.

81 A local priest provided an estimate of the pilgrims walking the route; the majority are Catholic, followed closely by Protestants. Some were still churchgoing; others had left the church but nonetheless felt a connection to God and Boniface. 80 per cent were from the surrounding region, but many were international, including a large segment of Dutch pilgrims. Retterath, *Deutschland: Bonifatius-Route*, 18–9.

82 Christian Vogel, "Einleitung," Bonifatius' letzter Weg von Mainz nach Fulda, http://www.bonifatiusweg.eu/.

83 Wolfgang Hamberger and Eitel J. Vida (eds.), *Der Bonifatiusweg: Die Wurzeln Europas entdecken* (Cologne: 2004).

84 Monika Vogt (ed.), *Zeiträume ohne Zeit: Begegnungen mit Bonifatius in Hessen* (Frankfurt/Wiesbaden: 2004).

85 Andrea Knoche, "Die Eiche: Eine volkskundliche Baumbetrachtung," in *Bonifatius: Heidenopfer, Christuskreuz, Eichenkult*, eds. Heide Böhm and Gudrun Noll (Bonn: 2004), 180–90.

to Hermann/Arminius, the victor of the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest that defeated a Roman army and united Germanic tribes.[86] The cutting down of the oak, however, came to symbolize Boniface's mission efforts in Germany, a contradiction not lost on later critics. The tree was a fairly dormant element in Bonifacian iconography: it was always there, in various forms, but it rose to prominence in the nationalist wave of the 19th century, which adopted the oak as a German symbol. Oak forests as monuments for patriots were proposed in the 18th century, and "Emperor's Oaks" in praise of Bismarck appeared in 1870–1871 after the Franco-Prussion war. Landscape architect Willy Lange (1864–1941, NSDAP member since 1930) planned the *Heldenhaine*, or "heroes' groves" of oaks where each tree stands for a German soldier fallen in World War I,[87] helping to create an "ecological racism" happily adopted by Heinrich Himmler.[88] The Nazis glorified the oak tree in their military decorations, and as a result of the Nazi-appropriation of earlier Protestant critics of Boniface, felling the tree was seen as a crime against Germanness in Robert Luft's aforementioned *Die Verchristung der Deutschen* (1937).

One of the more unexpected 2004 events was an exhibition in Erfurt dedicated to "sacred oaks," with much attention paid to Joseph Beuys' *7000 Oaks*, the monumental planting of 7000 oak trees in Kassel for the international art exposition *documenta 7*, in 1982.[89] Beuys explicitly intended to comment on and counteract the vanishing of Germany's forests, and theologian Marion Grau surmises he did this "to counteract Boniface's hatchet job on the oak."[90] A half dozen illustrations from the 1990s and the 2000s show that contemporary German artists think along the same lines, making fun of or criticizing Boniface – most notably Harald Kretzschmar, whose "Rare Multiplication of

86 Kai Uwe Schierz, "Von Bonifatius bis Beuys – oder: Vom Umgang mit heiligen Eichen," in *Bonifatius: Heidenopfer, Christuskreuz, Eichenkult*, 138–79.

87 George L. Mosse, "National Cemeteries and National Revival: The Cult of the Fallen Soldiers in Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 1 (1979), 1–20.

88 Rob van der Laarse, "Fatal Attraction: Nazi Landscapes, Modernism, and Holocaust Memory," in *Landscape Biographies*, eds. Jan Kolen, Johannes Renes, and Rita Hermans (Amsterdam: 2015), 345–75.

89 Kai Uwe Schierz (ed.), *Von Bonifatius bis Beuys – oder: Vom Umgang mit heiligen Eichen* (Erfurt: 2004). Schierz's introduction to the catalog ("Bonifatius, Beuys, heilige Eichen: Zur Genese eines künstlerischen Motivfeldes," 11–18) is a valuable overview of the iconography and symbolism of the German oak. See also Karl Schawelka, "'Sind eben alles Menschen gewesen' (Goethe): Heilige Eichen und andere Bäume in Kunst und Kultur, vorwiegend der Gegenwart," in *Bonifatius: Heidenopfer, Christuskreuz, Eichenkult*, eds. Heide Böhm and Gudrun Noll (Bonn: 2004), 146–80.

90 Marion Grau, *Rethinking Mission in the Postcolony: Salvation, Society and Subversion* (London: 2011), 137.

the Holy Boniface on the Investor Tip" depicts three men in business suits who swing axes to chop down buildings. The most telling ecological critique is a 2002 piece by Dutch artist herman de vries: he planted, on the banks of the Rhine in Düsseldorf, an oak tree surrounded by a palisade of cast-iron, gold-tipped spears. Along the palisade is written, in Latin, *wynfrith me caesit – herman me recreavit* ("Wynfrith cut me down, Herman resurrected me").[91]

3 The Netherlands

3.1 *Veneration and Imagery until the 20th Century*

The general patterns of Boniface veneration, criticism, and historical treatment in the Netherlands parallel what we find in Germany, though with a few important differences. In the Netherlands, Protestant criticism of Boniface never evolved into denunciation on a large scale, possibly because there was no great need for it: first of all, Willibrord is the apostle of the Netherlands, more so than Boniface. In addition, Catholicism was banned from the public sphere in 1581 and Catholic churches had been confiscated for use by the Dutch Reformed Church, the *de facto* state religion of the Dutch Republic: the Netherlands was officially a missionary territory for Catholics after 1592. There was nominal freedom of religion after 1785, but the 1848 constitution effectively outlawed public expressions of faith such as processions; a Rome-directed church hierarchy was restored only in 1853. Only after the Catholic emancipation in the 1800s did Boniface gain prominence, but he could not outdo Willibrord.[92]

As in Germany before the 1920s, Boniface was usually depicted as an old teacher of morality in the Netherlands. During the suppression of Catholicism, when the faith was practiced in clandestine churches, the standard image was of Boniface in his bishop's regalia, holding a crozier and whip (as an instrument of discipline, which seems more prevalent in the Netherlands than in Germany) in the one hand, and the well-known sword and book combination in the other. The history of this image in Dutch Catholicism was traced carefully by Olga Kotková; it finds its first iteration in a set of engravings from 1612 by Jacob Matham (1571–1631), and reaches full expression in the work of Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651) and his four sons, and of Johannes Colaert

91 Schierz, "Bonifatius, Beuys, heilige Eichen," 17–8.

92 A representative overview of the process of the conversion of the Netherlands for a popular audience is Patty Bange, "2000 jaar Nederlanders en hun kerstening," *Geloof in Nederland* 12 (2009), 362–91.

(1620/22–1678). The latter also produced a very different painting of a much younger Boniface preaching to a group of converts, with the pierced book at his feet – the martyrdom is indicated even as he is a young man preaching.[93] Striking in the painting is that the converts are dressed in Middle Eastern garb. This Orientalism, if that is what it is, is not unique: in the 1612 engraving by Matham, and a 1641 engraving from Cologne, the swords are curved, exoticizing the Frisian killers as Arabic.[94] This element does not seem present at all in Bonifacian iconography of the 19th century and after.

Matham's engraving included a cycle of the life of Boniface, but for the next few centuries the Dutch iconography of Boniface remains mostly limited to the static image of the timeless saint as martyred bishop. The section on Boniface in a 1918 calendar of "Dutch" saints is typical: the lengthy biography (after Willibrord's, the longest on any individual saint) describes him as an indefatigable missionary, promoted to archbishop of Germany in 732 and having converted over 100,000 people by 738. It spends just one short paragraph on his church organization and not one word on church reform. The accompanying image presents him as a venerable old man with a beard down to his chest, raising a book in his hand and his eyes to the heavens as his attackers are midstrike; the text suggests that the killers are Radbod II's henchmen.[95] It is fair to say, as Marco Mostert explained, that knowledge of Boniface's life and work among the Dutch laity remained limited to his preaching to the Frisians and his martyrdom. There is little evidence of a true cult of Boniface until the 19th century, and no evidence of much awareness of his historical importance among the Dutch in general.[96]

Dokkum itself had a minor but continuous cult. The parish church in Dokkum still has two items associated with Boniface: the first, a piece of the skull ascribed to the martyr, the second a lump of stone, allegedly petrified bread. The oldest known version of this bread story relates that the missionary asked a local woman for bread, but she denied having any and said all she had in her oven were stones. Well then, said Boniface, stones they will remain – and so it happened; the legend adds that the woman's angered kinfolk joined the gang that intended to murder him.[97]

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93 Reproduced in Kotková, "Willibrord und Bonifatius," 210–11.

94 Images reproduced in Kotková, "Willibrord und Bonifatius," 209, 213.

95 Th. M. Bekkers and E.H. Rijkenberg, *Uit Hollands Paradijs* (Haarlem: 1918).

96 Marco Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord* (Hilversum: 1999), 85–6.

97 Herman Peters, "Het bonifatiusbrood" (Dokkum: 1992), online at Bonifatius Kapel, https://www.bonifatiuskapel.nl/pdf/het_bonifatiusbrood.pdf; Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, 69, 81; Peter J.A. Nissen, "Het versteende brood: een volksverhaalmotief in een Oostmiddelnederlands leven van Bonifatius," *Archief voor de geschiedenis*

Starting in the 19th century, archeological digs were done to find the supposed well that sprung up after the martyrdom; there were annual pilgrimages to Dokkum; and at times there were concerted efforts to raise Boniface's profile, including in 1874 and 1882. A "bicycle pilgrimage" went to Dokkum in 1919,[98] making Boniface accessible to a broad swath of the population, the bicycle being a means of transportation to which almost every Dutch person had access. In 1923, when public Catholic processions were still (for all practical purposes) forbidden, a "processional area" had been set up just south-east of the city center, around a pond whose spring was one of the candidates for the Boniface well.[99] On this "private" area processions were allowed; the processional park became the center for Boniface veneration in the country, with the Boniface Well, as it is now called, as a focal point.[100] Annual pilgrimages were certainly held between 1930 and 1936, sometimes presided over by the Archbishop of Utrecht, Monsignor Jansen.[101] A chapel dedicated to Boniface was built in 1934, and the Stations of the Cross were constructed in 1949.[102] In 1962, a statue dedicated to Boniface was unveiled, whose inscription reads "HIC BONIFATIO LUMEN VITAE EXTORTUM DCCLIV HIC FRISIAE EVANGELII LUMEN EXORTUM" ("here Boniface's life-light was taken, 754, and here the light of the gospel was lit for Friesland"). But, as Paul Post outlines in an overview of the park's history, a period of decay started early in the 1960s, and the park became overgrown and neglected. It needed a miracle, and it got two: the coming of a "new young pastor" in 1984 and, in 1990, the miraculous cure of a young girl's whooping cough after immersion in the well. An estimated 20,000 visitors

van de katholieke kerk in Nederland 28 (1986), 173–91. The oldest witness is Rijksarchief in Gelderland MS 191, late 15th century, a miscellany containing an East-Middle Dutch life of Boniface, translated from three *vitae*: Willibald, the *Vita altera,* and the *Vita tertia.*

98 Paul Post, Jos Pieper, Marinus van Uden, *The Modern Pilgrim: Multidisciplinary Explorations of Christian Pilgrimage* (Leuven: 1998), 89–2. See also Paul Post, *Het wonder van Dokkum: Verkenning van populair religieus ritueel* (Nijmegen: 2000).

99 Paulus Gijsbertus Johannes Post,"Dokkum," in *Bedevaartplaatsen in Nederland 1*, eds. Peter Jan Margry and Charles Caspers (Amsterdam and Hilversum: 1997), 290–304; online at https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/bedevaart/bol/plaats/171. Dutch archeologist Herrius Halbertsma identified the "real" spring in the center of the city, and in 1990 protested vehemently against the later identification of the spring in the processional park. In a somewhat condescending response, the Dokkum pastor H. Peters said that God is not "concerned with trivial details when it comes to keeping the tradition of St. Boniface alive." Post, Pieper, van Uden, *The Modern Pilgrim*, 92–4.

100 Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, 81–2.

101 Patty Bange, "2000 jaar Nederlanders en hun kerstening," 386.

102 Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, 81–2.

come to the park each year, with the annual Boniface celebration attended by over a 1000 people.[103]

A particularly meaningful pilgrimage took place in 1926 to promote a national veneration of Boniface, and the organizing committee published a collection of documents reporting on the events.[104] One of the committee's driving forces was the Carmelite priest Titus Brandsma, a mystic who played an important role in 20th century Catholic emancipation. Festivities took place over two days in August, the first day in Leeuwarden (the capital of the province of Friesland), and the second day in Dokkum, in the procession park. Among the guests and celebrants were the archbishop of Utrecht and the bishops of Mainz and Fulda – the latter may have brought the saint's crozier to celebrate Mass with.[105] Reports of the celebration present a fairly conventional saint, and prove the endurance of the limited view of Boniface – one finds Boniface hailed almost exclusively as a Christian missionary, with Brandsma offering Boniface as proof that one should suffer for their faith.[106] Brandsma also, on behalf of the Frisians, apologizes for the murder of the saint – in Dutch, German, and Frisian – in the presence of the Mainz and Fulda bishops.[107] The only more general, "European" notes are placed by a historian who claims that Boniface paved the way for Charlemagne,[108] and a Jesuit who argues that without Boniface's church councils Western Catholicism might have disintegrated.[109]

3.2 *Post-world War II*

As in Germany, the Dutch Boniface of the postwar period was recast as a founder of modern Europe. But in the Netherlands this was not so easily accomplished – for starters, Boniface simply did not have Willibrord's popularity; in 1939, the 1200th anniversary of Willibrord's death was celebrated nationally, but Boniface's 1954 anniversary remained a local affair, even if Dokkum saw a relatively large-scale celebration. Historian Maria Petrus van Buijtenen, a

103 Post, Pieper, van Uden, *The Modern Pilgrim*, 90–1, 297–98.

104 *St.-Bonifatiusboek*, St.-Bonifatiusbroederschap (Nijmegen, Utrecht: 1929).

105 H.F. van der Horst, "De Eerste Nationale Bedevaart, 22–23 August 1926," in *St.-Bonifatiusboek*, 117–40.

106 Indeed, fifteen years later, in 1941, Brandsma was arrested, and the following year the Nazis murdered him in Dachau; Pope John Paul II beatified him in 1985.

107 Titus Brandsma, "Het Eerherstel der Friezen," *St.-Bonifatiusboek*, 148–57.

108 J. de Jong, "De oudste levensbeschrijvingen van den H. Bonifatius," *St.-Bonifatiusboek*, 41–51.

109 W. Mulder, "St. Bonifatius, Bevorderaar van Kerkvergaderingen," *St.-Bonifatiusboek*, 110–16.

devout Catholic,[110] gave the keynote address for an international congregation in Utrecht and argued for the European importance of Boniface. Van Buijtenen said that Boniface surpasses Willibrord, who was merely "a Benelux-man," naming the latter for the post-war alliance of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. He compares what he calls the Germanic "société close" with Boniface's Christian "société ouverte" (a rather puzzling characterization), and sees a parallel with Europe of the 1950s, allied with the United States and confronting a "closed" and authoritarian East. Van Buijtenen suggested that just as Europe changed course when Boniface crowned Pippin, so it did when George Marshall came to bring US assistance.[111] Van Buijtenen even placed Boniface's English background in a World War II perspective, referencing Pope Gregory the Great's puns about the Anglo-Saxons:

> Not only are they soft as Angels/English but also hard as rocks (*saxa*), because it was not that long ago that they defended our freedom also during the terrible war on their magnificent rocky island. Both these gifts from the Anglo-Saxons, the spread of the Gospel in the 8th century and the regaining of our freedom in this century, we know to be deeply imprinted in our spirit.[112]

The 1954 celebrations in the Netherlands were thus as political and sometimes pan-European[113] as those in Germany, though they lacked the trauma of national division. The suppression of Catholicism was a distant memory, and in a symposium that prepared historical materials for the participants and for

110 A.D.A. Monna, "Levensberichten: Maria Petrus van Buijtenen," *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (1998), 75–84. The 1954 celebration was described as a "high point" of his career in Friesland (1939–1963), and he is a "key player."

111 Maria Petrus van Buijtenen, *De betekenis van Bonifatius' eeuwfeest* [1954].

112 Maria Petrus van Buijtenen, "Bonifatius-Bisschop," *Frisia Catholica* 15 (1954), 10: "Niet alleen zijn zij zacht als Engel(s)en maar ook hard als rotsen (saxa), wijl zij nog niet zoveel jaren geleden onder de gruwelijke oorlog binnen hun schitterend rotseiland ook onze vrijheid verdedigden. Beide gaven, de evangelieverkondiging in de 8e eeuw en het herwinnen van onze vrijheid in deze eeuw van de Angelsaksen ontvangen te hebben, weten wij diep in onze geest geprent."

113 Dokkum mayor van Tuinen attended the 1955 celebrations in Crediton and Exeter, and in return, in August 1956, the Crediton church choir visited Dokkum on a four-stop tour of the Netherlands. In a booklet printed for the occasion, Dokkum's committee chairman recalls listening to the BBC radio during the war: "Your war was our war and your God was our God"; Sybren van Tuinen and G. de Vries, *Crediton in Dokkum: August 1956* (no place or date), 1. Boniface thus certainly enabled European localities to connect to each other in a larger network (see the contribution by James Palmer to this volume), something which might have pleased him.

the press a spirit of historical positivism prevails. One of the historians, exculpating the Frisians, suggested that the killers may have been "outsiders" to begin with.[114] Indeed, van Buijtenen, spokesman for an interdenominational committee, had argued that Boniface carried positive meanings for Catholics (as a representative of the church), for Protestants (as a staunch defender of the Gospel, until his death), and even for "humanists" (because Boniface's faith obliges one to love one's neighbor). Perhaps optimistically, his words are indicative of an ecumenical spirit in a highly pillarized country.[115] The (Calvinist) mayor of Dokkum, Sybren van Tuinen, agreed, stressing the saint's importance in an increasingly secular world where dedication to Boniface, he lamented, was mostly symbolic.[116] The accompanying publication pales in comparison to the German volume, at 36 pages and seven black and white illustrations, but offers a few interesting tidbits. For one, it is bilingual and has six articles in Frisian, continuing and emphasizing the Frisian-language note already struck by Brandsma in 1926: the death of Boniface is an occasion for promoting Frisian language and even independence, which begs the question of guilt. The Dokkum mayor already said that celebrating the murder, as some act of rebellion, would be unacceptable.[117] Complaints about the feast play being just a (worldly) spectacle performed on a Sunday, and about Rome-oriented celebrations, did not prevent Friesland's provincial government from acting ecumenically and giving financial support.[118]

The province funded the feast play and accompanying music, and an exhibition of various artefacts in Dokkum.[119] Both the feast play and the catalog for the exhibition were bilingual. The double attitude on the part of the Frisians continues: the growing importance of Frisian language is indicative of the increased drive toward Frisian regional independence, but celebrating Boniface in Frisian is deeply ironic – the Frisians killed him, and Boniface, directly or indirectly, contributed to the subjugation of the Frisians in his time.

The feast play written by Fedde Schurer problematizes this duality, having a large cast of Frisian characters; some of them are followers of Boniface, others

114 *Nationale Bonifatius Herdenking: Symposion. Stichting tot herdenking van Bonifatius' marteldood 754–1954* (Leeuwarden: 1953), 52.

115 van Buijtenen, *Bonifatius' eeuwfeest*.

116 Sybren van Tuinen, *Dokkum en Bonifatius* (Dokkum: 1953).

117 van Tuinen, *Dokkum en Bonifatius*.

118 Klaas Runia, "Grepen uit de discussies in gemeenteraden en Prov. Staten," in *Bonifatius' Marteldood 754–1954* (Dokkum: 1954), 34–5.

119 Fedde Schurer, *Bonifatius: Histoarysk spul yn trije bidriuwen; Friese en Nederlandse tekst* (Drachten: 1954); *Marteldea fan biskop Bonifaes en syn maten/Marteldood van bisschop Bonifatius en gezellen: Catalogus, Bonifatiustentoonstelling 1954* (Dokkum: 1954).

are engaged in the plot to kill him. A third group is sympathetic to Boniface's Christian ideals but is entrenched in a violent Frisian identity. This group wants to avenge the saint's death; they are swayed, however, by Frisian Christians who implore their fellows to stay true to Boniface's non-violent attitude, and refrain from taking revenge on the murderers. The play stops there, without staging the violent reprisal by Frankish forces from Utrecht.

Amidst the conventionality two developments are worth noting. First, in contrast to the 1926 pilgrimage and before, the 1954 celebration has a much more historically complete and even ecumenical character; there is a concerted effort to make Boniface relevant to a broader audience and give him a place in the new post-war Europe of NATO and the European Union.[120] Second, the historical play seems an effort to humanize the saint, to present larger sections of his biography in a historical and narrative context that depicted the real-life consequences of his work on ordinary Frisians, who could merge a stubborn Frisian nature with a non-violent Christian attitude into a new identity.

The best example of this new Boniface is the commemorative stamp issued by the Dutch postal service (Image 18.4C). The postal service had originally planned a caption in Latin, "Strages Bonifatii gloria Doccomii" ("the death of Boniface is Dokkum's fame"), arguably in poor taste. Instead, the final design was a captionless portrait drawn by Hubert Levigne (1905–1989), a graphic artist and glass maker who drew Boniface in the modern stark style. Boniface is shown middle-aged with a pensive look on his face, wearing a simple monk's habit. There is no indication of the violence of the martyrdom or the power of his office; he is a man like other men. The accompanying postmark did have an image of a book pierced with a sword, and the caption "Dokkum, Boniface city, 754–1954," but the stamp humanizes Boniface and makes him appear significantly younger. It strongly contrasts with the very traditional stamps issued by the German postal service and that of Vatican City, both of which rely on conventional iconography (Image 18.4D),[121] and signals a rejuvenation and humanization that, I believe, was an effort to preserve the influence of the church and its tradition.

3.3 *2004 Celebrations in Dokkum*

The 2004 celebrations in the Netherlands were relatively minor. Unlike in Germany, Boniface didn't get a stamp. While there was a slew of publications for the occasion (mostly for a broad, often popular audience, but also many

120 The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1948, the Treaty of Paris, which paved the way for the EU, in 1949.

121 Bate Hylkema, "Actuele 'herbeleving' van Bonifatius in Dokkum," 2014. https://www.postzegelblog.nl/2014/06/15/actuele-herbeleving-van-bonifatius-dokkum/.

academic articles) and some touristy trinkets for sale in Dokkum,[122] there was little in the way of devotional material, and nothing that could be considered a national celebration.

Perhaps the most visible and controversial event was an opera whose plot and objectives couldn't be more different from the Fulda musical. The set and the promotional material indicated it must have had an impressive budget for a production that ran for only six shows, and was supported by local businesses, cultural foundations, the province, and the city of Leeuwarden (Dokkum has no theater large enough for this production). Frisian language and identity still matter in portrayals of Bonifacian history, real and imagined, and parts of Peter te Nuyl's libretto were in Frisian.[123] No dramatization of Boniface's life takes such liberties as this opera, where Boniface's antagonist is the goddess Eastra. Boniface possibly has sex with this goddess, cuts down oak trees all over Europe, and finally destroys an oak in Friesland dedicated to Eastra. The opera's conclusion is a court case in which Boniface is found guilty of desecration, and he is decapitated (Image 18.8). But his death is also a self-chosen sacrifice worked out in a scheme between Franks and missionaries: it provides Charles Martel with a reason to subdue Dokkum and subjugate the Frisians, and in return, Boniface gets immediate sanctification.[124] The opera is not a staging of Boniface's life or an attempt to bring him closer to the people, as the German musical was – it is a reckoning.

As sacrilegious and convoluted as this may seem, it is in keeping with the ambivalent attitudes the Dutch and the Frisians have toward Boniface and toward Christianity as a whole.[125] That the saint would be sexually attracted to

122 Merchants in Dokkum sold Boniface-branded wine, beer, pastries, and ice cream. The most tenuous object was the Brunoon coin, issued by the city of Dokkum, a copy of an 11th-century coin that had nothing to do with Boniface. The only object one could call relevant and religious was a small, modern, and charming Boniface statue made of soapstone, for sale in Dokkum. There were radio shows and newspaper articles, including in Protestant papers; among the publications was also Akky van de Veer, *Bonifatius en syn tiid* (Leeuwarden: 2004), a biography (for adolescents) in Frisian that was also published in Dutch.

123 And in ten other languages, including a few made-up approximations of medievalist language that mixes Frisian, German, and French, according to De Nuyl: "these approximations have hardly been researched; they are scarcely founded on historical fact." Peter te Nuyl and Veronica Timmer, trans., *Bonifacius: Libretto* (Leeuwarden: 2004), 3.

124 Rudolf Nammensma (ed.), *Bonifacius: Programma* (Leeuwarden: 2004), 8–9.

125 This attitude is already quite visible in the work of Dutch Protestant historian Auke Jelsma, whose 1973 biography *De blaffende hond: Aspecten uit het leven van Wynfreth-Bonifatius* (*ca. 672–754*) is mostly critical of the saint and his methods, but (reflecting some German Protestant scholars of the 19th century) praised, or grudgingly approved of, his tenacity and reliance on the Gospel. This biography was revised and republished in

IMAGE 18.8 Scene from the finale of Dutch opera *Bonifatius* (Leeuwarden: 2004)

a pagan goddess/priestess is not unexpected in a sexually progressive country – the flesh, even Boniface's flesh, won't be denied. Many Dutch people seem to see Boniface as an archetype of the destroyer of the natural world, and his death, as punishment, comes as wishful thinking. One might expect ambivalence from the converted and then profoundly secularized Dutch (and Frisians), which one sees sometimes among the Germans too, but in the Dutch version a kind of violent resentment against Boniface outweighs the respect given to him for having helped found a Christian world. Had Boniface created a Fulda in the Netherlands, things might have gone differently – as it is, neither Utrecht nor Dokkum are Boniface foundations, and so he remains an outsider. It is also striking that here, as in Winfried Abel's German play, Islam plays a part – on the one hand it is a threat to Western Europe inside the play, on the other it is cited as spiritual inspiration.[126] It is as if the opera means to apologize for a violent medieval Christianity, accompanied by a token of respect and

2003, just in time for the celebrations, as *Bonifatius: Zijn leven, zijn invloed* (Zoetermeer: 2003). That same year Jelsma also published a translation of the sermons sometimes ascribed to Boniface, *Het leven als leerschool: Preken van Bonifatius* (Laren: 2003).

126 The program has no text from Boniface's letters or hagiography, but it has two pages from the *Rasā'il al-Ikhwān al-safā'* (*Treatises of the Brethren of Purity*), a 10th-century Muslim encyclopedia; Nammensma, *Bonifacius: Programma*, 12–3.

reconciliation in a post 9/11 world where Islamophobia has been embraced by some Dutch populist parties. And while Abel's 2004 play was critical of the Church and included some scandalous language, its final memory of the saint is that of a spiritual leader – the Dutch opera presented an important and impressive man who was executed as a criminal. A short Dutch film from 2010 implies, like the opera, that Boniface was rightfully killed for spreading a violent and intolerant Christianity[127] (a criticism completely missing from similar German expressions[128]): this condemnation of the saint is part and parcel of the Dutch conception of Boniface, at least for those outside of the Catholic church.

Since 2004, it is difficult to detect much religious engagement with Boniface in the Netherlands. In Dokkum, the last remaining center of Boniface interest, his memory is the main tourist attraction,[129] but practically all other interest is scholarly. The dual Frisian attitude toward Boniface's death and Frisian guilt, after Brandsma's extensive apologies and the 2004 opera's "reckoning," has relaxed a bit, if we are to believe Hinne Wagenaar, a Frisian Protestant minister: "we have a kind of reversal of perspective: the violence of the sword was used not only by those ripe for the missionary, but by the missionary himself. Not only was Boniface the (only) victim of Frisian violence but the Frisians themselves fell victim to the violence of the missionary." The Frisians killed Boniface, but in turn were killed in the revenge attack; moreover, Frisian (pagan) identity was violently erased by the coming of Christianity. From Wagenaar's perspective, the reciprocal violence is canceled out in the long historical perspective; Titus Brandsma's search for a reconciliation ended by placing blame and gratitude on both sides.[130]

127 *De schaduw van Bonifatius*, directed by Thijs Schreuder, 2010, https://vimeo.com/67730780.

128 A brief documentary on the German ZDF channel from 2014 characterizes the German consensus: Boniface was stubborn (not intolerant) and aggressive (not violent); see *Bonifatius*, ZDF God's Cloud series, 2014, https://www.zdf.de/kultur/gods-cloud/bonifatius-102.html.

129 The local tourist agency in Dokkum could not provide specific data, but the director assured me in a letter that many of the city's visitors come for Boniface, either for religious or for historical reasons, and they publish promotional material specifically for that market; Hinke Kemper to Michel Aaij, Personal communication, 3 August 2005. The 2004 material, for instance, included a booklet published in German, English, and Dutch: "Man with a Mission" is a semi-hagiographical walking tour centered completely on Boniface.

130 Hinne Wagenaar, "Boniface and the Frisian Lands Revisited: Outline of a Precarious Historical Relationship," *It Beaken: Tydskrift fan de Fryske Akademy* 68.3-4 (2006). Online at https://hinnewagenaar.frl/articles/boniface-and-the-frisian-lands-revisited/.

As for tourists and pilgrims, by 2001 the city of Dokkum, the "Lourdes of the North," drew some 20,000 visitors annually (including New Age tourists[131]), many of whom were attracted by the Bonifacian legacy. The city, for whose entrepreneurs Boniface is a true blessing,[132] has laid out walking paths, printed brochures, dedicated a museum to the saint,[133] and organized some of its public space around the supposed locations of the martyrdom. The extent to which the "revitalization of Dokkum" involves marketing Boniface has been elucidated by Paul Post.[134] Some of Dokkum's marketing efforts were not very tasteful – "Dokkum, een moordstad" was a slogan in the 1980s and 90s: "Dokkum, a city to die for" carries some of its meaning.[135] While commercial interest has always played a part in the cult of the saints, the spread of relics, and the organization of pilgrim routes, one rarely finds evidence in the Netherlands of a much organized devotion to the saint, unless it be among individual believers.[136] Without such religiosity, which still seems to be present in Germany, one wonders whether there still is a Dutch cult of Boniface.

4 Conclusion

It seems that the lack of any cult of Boniface in England, and the withering of a cult in the Netherlands, means that in a secular world a saint's cult can stay alive only if it has relics (and a long association with those relics) and is supported by a significant number of believers and a broader base among the population. None of these things are present in England, and only one is present in the Netherlands, but the Dutch relics in the place of his martyrdom could not

131 Mostert, 754: *Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, 82.

132 Mostert, 754: *Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, 80–2.

133 A building adjacent to the former Admiraliteitshuis in Dokkum, now the city's historical museum, houses a permanent exhibition on Boniface.

134 Post, Pieper, van Uden, *The Modern Pilgrim*, 121–43.

135 Co Welgraven, "Hoe herdenk je een brute moord?," *Trouw*, 24 February 2001. https://www.trouw.nl/home/hoe-herdenk-je-een-brute-moord-~aa0610cb/.

136 There are some outliers. One is a recent publication which combines scholarly contributions (in a popular tone) with ecumenical, spiritual messaging: Luit van der Tuuk, (ed.), *Bonifatius in Dorestad: De evangeliebrenger van de Lage Landen–716* (Utrecht: 2016). Another is a 2013 movie, *De wederopstanding van een klootzak* ("The resurrection of a bastard"), directed by Guido van Driel and based on the comic book (*Om mekaar in Dokkum*) he was commisioned to write in 2004 by Dongeradeel, Dokkum's municipality. One half of the plot concerns an asylum seeker from Angola who recognizes the pre-Christian beliefs associated with the Donar Oak in the Boniface story, and teaches those to a criminal who fled to Dokkum to avoid assassination.

sustain a lasting cult, given the history of violent suppression of Catholicism, especially in Friesland. Boniface is not well-known among the general population in the Netherlands (or England) compared to Germany – and Catholics make up a smaller part of the population. His cult remains viable in Germany, where, as of 2017, Catholicism still claimed 28 per cent of the population, or 23 million people, and where there are not only relics but also churches and monasteries founded by the saint and trails mirroring the saint's path through Hesse and Thuringia. But Boniface is much greater than his Catholic cult and continues to influence people beyond those who venerate him. In the Netherlands this has impacted his legacy and reputation negatively, but in Germany, interest in Boniface as a cultural and historical figure is supported by entities outside of the Catholic church: financial and academic interests continue to come together in support of conferences, exhibitions, anniversaries, and publications that support his legacy. How long this will last remains to be seen.

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Index

Page numbers in *italics* indicate illustrations. Square brackets are used to indicate alternative spellings.

Aajj, Michel 1, 2, 6, 123, 195, 200, 383, 428, xiv
Abba (count) 353
Abbo of St. Wandrill 260
Abel, Winfried 453–54, 468
Abel of Reims 22, 23, 234, 264
Abirhilt manuscripts 76, 77, *80*, 80–84
Adalbero of Würzburg 189
Adalhar (companion of Boniface) 368–69, 370
Adalunc kin group 307
Adam of Bremen 372
Adda. *See* Heddo of Strasbourg
Adela of Pfalzel 52
Adenauer, Konrad 451–52, 453n61
Admonitio Generalis 208–9, 325
Ado von Vienne, martyrology of 376
Adolph, Gustav 409
Æbbe (mother of Leoba) 29
Ælfled of Whitby 52
Ælfthryth (abbess of Repton) 81
Aeneid (Virgil) 149
Æthelbald (king of Mercia) 43, 137n77, 138, 141, 229, 240–41, 244, 253
Æthelbert II (king of Kent) 42n89, 112n33
Æthelburg (sister of Eorcenwald of London) 36n49
Æthilwald, Aldhelmian poems of 125n9, 128, 130
Agilbert (bishop of Wessex) 32
Agilolf of Cologne 23, 234
Akademische Bonifatiuseinigung (Academic Boniface Union) 422–23
St Alban of Mainz 366
Albina kin group 310
Alcuin of York
  medieval veneration of Boniface and 360, 367–68, 373, 384–85, 400
  poem on bishop of Utrecht 332
  poet, teacher, and grammarian, Boniface as 111, 114, 122
  preaching of Boniface and 209
  Vita Willibrordi 184, 188, 334–37
  West Saxon background of Boniface and 44
  Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 159
Aldebert (heretic) 134, 186, 230, 232, 234, 237, 238, 319
Aldgisl (Frisian leader) 330, 333, 343
Aldhelm of Malmesbury
  Boniface influenced by 2, 10, 33, 38, 51, 99, 104, 108, 111, 112, 114–15, 155
  Boniface teaching works and Aldhelmian style of 120–21
  British church and 33, 38, 39
  Carmen de uirginitate 108, 114, 116n53, 128n26
  Carmina ecclesiastica 114
  Carmen rhythmicum 38, 122
  De metris 114–15, 122
  Enigmata 108, 113–15, 122
  Isidore of Seville's *Synonyms* and 82
  literary influence of 2, 66, 154–55
  metrical textbook of 114–15
  North German identity of 40
  Rome, visiting 41
  style and rhetoric of Bonifatian correspondence borrowing from 136, 148, 149, 150
  verse treatise on virginity 86
  Vienna Codex, Aldhelmian poems of Æthilwald in 125n9, 128, 130
  Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 153, 154–55, 164, 188
  Wynbert of Nursling and 33
Alemannia 13, 18, 222–23, 258, 302, 309, 314
Algermissen, Heinz Josef (bishop of Fulda) 456
Altbolt/Aluoldus (Thuringian noble) 276, 284
Altfrid of Münster, *Vita Liudgeri* 61, 176, 183, 184, 333
Altmünster 72

Aluberht 58
Aluoldus/Altbolt (Thuringian noble) 276, 284
Ambrose of Milan 65, 195, 269
Amöneburg 14–15, 20, 270, 276, 280, 290, 302, 392
Anaklet (pope) 244
ancilla Dei 70
Angenendt, Arnold 56, 342n42
Angles 176, 275, 333
amicitia spiritualis 146
animal sacrifices and consumption of sacrificial animals 16, 210, 216–17, 230, 290–93
Annales Fuldenses antiquissimi 385, 386, 391
Annales Iuvavenses Maximi (Annals of Salzburg) 322
Annales Mettenses Priores 314
Annales necrologici (Fulda) 385, 387, 391, 392
Annales regni Francorum 25, 242, 268, 320
Annegray (Burgundian monastery) 64
Anthelmus of Passau 320
Apostle of Europe, Boniface as 404, 425, 427, 452n58, 456
Apostle of the Germans/Germany
  Boniface as 192–93, 249, 399, 403, 411, 413, 425, 427, 429, 432, 433, 443, 456
  Hitler as 443
  Luther as 420, 435, 456
Apostle of the Netherlands, Willibrord and Boniface as 460
Apostolic Passionary, women's monastery of Karlberg *80*, 81–84, 85
Apostolicae sedis hortatu 244
Aquitaine 251, 253, 258, 314, 319, 320
Arab expansion into Europe 17, 253–54
Arbeo of Freising 302n14, 320–21, 322–23
archaic usage, Boniface on 103–4
Arianism 195
Aribert (layman under Pippin III) 237
Aribo (archbishop of Cologne) 366
Aris, Marc-Aeilko 182n49, 184–85
Arminius (Hermann; Germanic chieftain) 406, 411, 458–59
Arn of Salzburg 300, 324, 325
Ars grammatica (Boniface) 101–6, 109, 120
Ars minor (Donatus) 101
Asbach, Franz Bernd 211n48
Asulfus (Thuringian noble) 276
Augsburg 303n20, 310
Augsburg, Peace of (1555) 420
Augustine of Canterbury 37, 39, 91, 120n62, 192, 204n12, 213, 341, 349
Augustine of Hippo 90–91, 94, 120, 230
  Commentary on the Psalms *80*, 81
  Confessions 142, 146
  De Trinitate 75–76
  letters of 143n106
Austrasia 4, 53, 237, 251, 254, 255, 259, 262, 264, 273, 294, 343, 345
Auxerre, diocesan council of (692–696) 220
Avars 300, 325–26

Balderich of Utrecht 369
Baldhard 70
baptisms
  improper 16, 119, 317
  Old Saxon Baptismal Vow/Utrecht baptismal promise 224n16, 338
St Bardo 447
Barking, double house of 36n49
Barth, Ludwig 440
Basler Blutsegen 78–79
Basler Rezepte 78
Bavaria 4–5, 299–326
  See also specific locations
  arrival and early years of Boniface in 302–5
  ecclesiastical organization and bishoprics in 13, 17–20, 301–2, 303, 305–12
  Eichstätt and Heidenheim, foundations of 312–16
  hagiographical tradition in 321–24
  impact of Boniface on 299–301
  legacy of Boniface in 324–26
  map *304*
  papal letters of introduction to 18
  political and ecclesiastical history of 301–2
  reform/reform councils in 222–23, 257
  romani in 306
  Virgil of Salzburg, conflicts with 24, 158, 308–10, 316–21
Beall, Judith 169, 170
Becht-Jördens, Gereon 194, 393n60
Bede 55, 82, 111, 135, 202, 373
  commentaries of 82, 90, 111, 120n6255
  De arte metrica 103–4

Ecclesiastical History 28, 37, 38, 66, 154n17, 177n11, 179, 254n26, 332–33, 373
Martyrologium 373, 376
Behrtwald (archbishop of Canterbury) 10, 42, 51
Benedict of Nursia 65, 187
Benedictine Rule 20, 22, 28, 30, 234, 289n43, 290
Benedictus Levita 244
Beowulf 169n81, 170
Berhtgyt[h] (female follower of Boniface) 70, 136–37, 146n123, 149, 151n143, 285, 286n89
Berlstedt 290
Berning, Wilhelm (bishop of Osnabrück) 424
Bernlef (blind Frisian singer) 333
Bernshausen 273
Berschin, Walter 153, 154, 172, 174
Beuys, Joseph, *7000 Oaks* 459
Birinus (bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames) 31
Bischoff, Bernhard 69, 75, 76
Bischofsberg 393, 395
Bischofsheim 147
bishoprics, Boniface as organizer of 16–21
See also specific sees, e.g. Mainz
Bishop's Waltham 29, 30, 32
Bismarck, Otto von 435, 459
Bloemaert, Abraham 428n1, 460
Bobbio 64
body of Boniface
Bonifatius-Route tracing journey of 457–58
dedication of Fulda's abbey church (819), translation of body of St Boniface at 358–59, 393–94, 396
Fulda, burial/tomb of Boniface at 26, 171, 187, 357–59, 378, 380
struggle over possession of 171, 187, 188, 350–51, 357, 362–63, 367, 371
body of Leoba, burial of 70–71, 78, 147, 398
body of St Quirinus, translation of 310n55
body of St Valentinus, translation of 322
Böhmer, Karl 426, 450
Boniface 1–6, 9–26
adoption of name *Boniface* 12
as Apostle of the Germans/Germany 192–93, 249, 399, 403, 411, 413, 425, 427, 429, 432, 433, 443, 456
as archbishop 16–17
bishop, ordination as 14, 15, 190
books owned by 82–83, 120, 269, 398–99n88
contextualization of 1–2
(*See also* networks; West Saxon background; women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles)
as ecclesiastical organizer 16–21
failing eyesight, in old age 33, 60, 139–40, 296
future areas of study 6
geographical spheres of activity 3–5, *xviii*
(*See also* Bavaria; Francia; Frisia; Hessia and Thuringia)
images of (*See* images of Boniface)
influence and significance of 1, 26
map of places in which Boniface was active *xviii*
martyrdom at Dokkum 3, 5
(*See also* body of Boniface; martyrdom of Boniface at Dokkum)
as missionary 10–16, 39–44
(*See also* missionizing and missionary impulse)
as monk 10, 11
North German identity of 40, 50, 58
ordo, devotion to concept of 250, 262
origins, childhood, education, and monastic vocation 10, 28–29, 138–39, 156–57
papal mandate granted to 12
personality and character of 42–43, 52–53, 137–41, 174–75
as reformer 21–25
(*See also* reform and reform councils)
successorship concerns 25
veneration and afterlife of 5–6
(*See also* veneration of Boniface)
written sources for 1, 2–3, 9
(*See also* correspondence of Boniface; penance and penitentials; poet, grammarian, and teacher, Boniface as; preaching of Boniface; reform and reform councils; saints' lives)
written texts, trust in authority of 346n57

Wynfrith as birth name of 29
Boniface VII (pope) 454n65
Boniface Association (*Bonifatius-Verein*) 414–15, 417, 434, 437, 446, 447–49, *448*, *449*, 451
St Boniface of Tarsus 374
Boniface und Lul (Hahn) 130
Bonifatius (2004 Dutch opera) *467*, 467–68
Bonifatius - Das Musical 454–56, *455*, 468
Bonifatius lebt (Winfried Abel) 453–54, 468
Bonifatius-Route 457–58
Bonifatiusweg 458
Bonifazius Blatt 417
books
Boniface requesting 33, 55–56, 75, 120, 135, 139, 148
gendered messages in manuscripts produced by women 84–91, *87*
held over head by Boniface at martyrdom 176, 182n49, 185, 195–200, 428, 431
Hrabanus Maurus, library of 392
owned by Boniface 82–83, 120, 269, 398–99n88
prayer cards, in representations of Boniface on 428
scriptoria run by women in Anglo-Saxon monastic circles 75–77
texts and transmissions at women's monastic houses 77–84, *80*
Utrecht, library of Anglo-Saxon mission at 348
Bouhot, Jean-Paul 206–7
Brandsma, Titus 463, 465, 469
Breviarum Sancti Lulli 286–87
British church
Anglo-Saxon control of 32, 33, 37–38
Augustine of Canterbury and 37
Boniface and 36–39
missionary impulse of 39–41
Broome, Richard 176–77, 181
Bruder, Peter 368n68
Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegili* 193
Brunhild of Austrasia 64
Brunward (monk of Fulda) 358–59
Bubo (Frisian commander) 330–31
Buckfast Abbey, Devon 432n7
Bugga (Heahburg; correspondent of Boniface) 42, 75, 111–12, 113, 134–35, 137n77, 138, 143, 146, 149
Buijtenen, Maria Petrus van 463–65
Bunsen, Karl Josias von 417
Büraburg 16, 19, 20, 60, 62, 223, 227, 261, 273, 276, 281, 284–87, 296, 297, 311
Burchard of Worms 185
Burchard (Burkhard) of Würzburg
in Bavaria 314, 315
correspondence of Boniface with 144–45
in Francia 266
in Hessia and Thuringia 285, 287
life of Boniface and 19
network of Boniface and 65
reforms/reform councils and 223, 225, 227
women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles and 73–76
Burginda (nun) 149–50n141
Burgundy 64, 253, 255
Büttner, Heinrich 279
Byzantium 251, 254, 256, 331

Caedwalla (king of West Saxons) 31, 32, 33, 41
Caesurae uersuum (Boniface) 109–10, 113
canonization
of Boniface 359, 372
of Sturm 402n100
Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum 228–29, 239–40, 241
Capitula de invasoribus monasteriorum 229
Capitulary of Herstal (779) 324–25
Carinthia and Carinthians 320n107, 323, 325
Carloman (mayor of the palace)
Bavaria under 307, 314, 316, 317, 319
Francia under 261, 262, 264
Frisia under 347
Fulda and 383
Hadeloga as half-sister of 74
Hessia and Thuringia under 289, 295
life of Boniface and 3, 4, 21, 24
reform/reform councils and 219–21, 223–27, 229, 232–35, 237–39, 243, 244
retirement to monastic life 205, 319
Saxony invaded by 294–95
vitae of Boniface and 162, 190
Carmen de uirginitate (Aldhelm of Malmesbury) 108, 114, 116n53, 128n26

Carmina ecclesiastica (Aldhelm of Malmesbury) 114
Carmen rhythmicum (Aldhelm of Malmesbury) 38, 122
Cartula sancti Bonifatii 131
Catholics and Catholicism
in Germany (*See* Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in)
Netherlands, modern veneration of Boniface in 460, 462–65, 469, 470
Cellanus of Péronne 121n67
Centwine (king of West Saxons) 31
Ceolred of Mercia 240
Chalon-sur-Saône, Council of (647/653) 220–21
Charlemagne
Admonitio Generalis 208–9, 325
Alcuin and 114
anti-pagan decrees under 293–94
Bavarian duke, deposition of 4, 62n86, 300, 323–24
Boniface's character compared to 140
changes to ecclesiastical culture under 122
Divisio Regnorum of 806 315n78
ecclesiastical organization under 23–24
Leoba and 71
Lex Frisionum 330
Lull and 286
mound burials and 291
protector of Christendom, self-portrayal as 326
Psalter of 375
reform/reform councils under 3, 244, 300, 324–25
Saxons, conversion of 4
veneration of Boniface and 375, 463
Charles Martel
Arabs defeated by 17, 253
Bavaria under 299, 302
bishops ordained by Boniface in lifetime of 19
in *Bonifatius* (2004 Dutch opera) 468
church under 16, 17, 258–62
correspondence of Boniface with 142
death of 21, 240, 262, 311, 313–15
decrees, inability to issue 265
Francia under 250, 252, 255–56, 258–60
Frisia and 14, 343n44, 345, 349
Gewilib of Mainz and 186
Hessia and Thuringia, Boniface in 276, 281, 282, 283, 284
pope's letter of introduction to 15, 127n18, 255, 256
reform/reform councils and 219, 223–24
relationship of Boniface with 4, 255–56
Saxons, military campaign against 17, 40n75, 284–85, 303
sociopolitical networks and 62, 63
Willibrord and 51, 255
Chelles 76
Chiemsee 309
Childebert III (Merovingian ruler) 322n118
Childeric III (Merovingian ruler) 267–68
Chlothar II (Merovingian ruler) 221
chorepiscopi 25, 167, 308, 325
Chrodegang of Metz 243, 267n103
Chronicon Hirsaugiensis (Johannes Trithemius) 194n114
Chronicon Laurissense breve 388
Chunipert, donation of 310
Cicero 103
Clausula de unctione Pippini 242
Clay, John-Henry 4, 36, 46, 56, 142, 270, 303n19, xiv
Clemens/Clement (heretic) 134, 204, 230, 232, 234, 319
"clerical" and liturgical practices of women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles 91–95
clerical [mis]behaviour
Boniface's concern with 14, 16, 22, 39
Frankish court and 259
penance/penitentials and 212–13, 217, 218
preaching of Boniface and 201, 205, 208
reform/reform councils and 227–28, 229, 230, 231, 233, 237, 263
Clofesho, Council of (747) 240–41
Clovis II (Merovingian ruler) 220
coded language used by Boniface, in Vienna Codex 128–29
Codex Eberhardi 382, *401*, 401–2
Codex Fuldensis 431n5
Codices Latini Antiquiores 90
Codici Bonifatiani 398–99n88
Colaert, Johannes 460–61
Collectio capitularium 235
Collectio Cottoniana 241

Collectio de raptoribus (Hincmar of Reims) 245
Collectio Dionysiana prima 234
Collectio Sancti Amandi 221
Collectio Vetus Gallica 212, 222
Collins, Roger 254n26, 268
Cologne, as episcopal see 132–33, 227, 234, 264, 295, 316, 347–48, 352, 366, 410
Columbanus 10, 64, 65, 158, 211, 212, 411
commemoration, networks of 58–59
commemoration of Boniface as saint. *See* veneration of Boniface
Commentary on Ecclesiastes (Jerome) 76
Commentary on the Psalms (Augustine of Hippo) *80*, 81
Concilium Germanicum (742) 221, 225–28, 234
  Bavarian activities of Boniface and 314
  Francia and 259, 263
  life of Boniface and 19, 21–22
  Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and 190
  pagan practices condemned by 290, 293–94
  penance/penitentials and 210, 212–13, 215
Confessions (Augustine of Hippo) 142, 146
Congress of Vienna (1815) 409
consanguinity/incest rules 16, 39, 127, 213–14, 233, 238
Continuatio Fredegarii 9, 242, 266, 343n44
Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum 308–9n44, 325
conversion. *See* paganism and conversion
Converting the Isles project 49
Corbie 212, 214, 217, 218, 221
St Corbinian 302n14, 322–23
correspondence of Boniface 2, 123–51
  Aldhelmian poems of Æthilwald in Vienna Codex 125n9, 128, 130
  books requested as missionary resources in 33, 55–56, 75, 120
  citation numbers 123n4, 125
  collectio communis and *collectio pontifica* 125
  exile and loneliness, themes of 135, 142
  forgeries, falsifications, and misrepresentations 123, 126, 127–28, 131–34
  Gregorian register of letters and organization of 127
  image and personality of Boniface derived from 137–41
  local communications 59–60
  love, affection, and friendship, expressing 58, 60, 113, 135, 138–39, 140–41, 144, 145–46, 147–49
  manuscripts 124–29
  medieval collection and circulation of 9, 123–24
  missionary impulse in 141–43
  model letters in 134–35
  modern editorial history 124–25, 130–31
  network of Boniface and 47–48, 141, 150
  new and complete English version, need for 131, 150–51
  oral messages accompanying 145n117
  Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* using 123, 126, 128, 129, 132, 188, 190–91
  palindrome in Vienna Codex 128
  prayer requests in 57–58, 143–45
  private in-jokes and secret/coded language in 128–29, 135–36
  on reform/reform councils 238–41
  ritualized discourses and gift-giving in 56
  significance of 123–24, 150
  style and rhetoric of 134–37, 138, 141
  textual community of 135–36, 141, 142–43
  West Saxon background of Boniface, as source for 28, 29
  Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 153–54
  with women 147–49
councils. *See* reform and reform councils
Counter-reformation 417
Crediton, Devon, as Boniface's birthplace 10, 29, 432
Cruel, Rudolf 206
cult of Boniface. *See* veneration of Boniface
Cummean (Irish abbot) 210, 212, 214
Cünnen, Janina 136, 143n106, 146
Cuthbert of Canterbury 34, 139, 192, 229, 238–41, 362, 372
Cuthred (king of Wessex) 241
Cuthswith (Cuthsuuitha) of Inkberrow 76
Cyneburg [Cuniburg] of Inkberrow 35, 73–74, 76, 144–45
Cynegils (king of West Saxons) 31
Cynehild[e] (aunt of Lull) 70, 147n129, 285, 286n89
Cynetrud (follower of Boniface) 285

Dadanus (bishop) 19, 226, 227
dadsisas 294, 339
Dagobert I (Merovingian ruler) 340
Dagobert II (Merovingian ruler) 133, 251, 340, 347
d'Aguesseau, Henri François 205
Daniel of Winchester
  Athelbald and 241
  book requested from 33, 60n70, 120n62, 139
  on conversion of pagans 53, 141, 143, 202–3
  correspondence of Boniface with 139–40, 141–42, 143, 259
  letter of introduction from 11, 280
  on paganism and conversion 53, 202–3
  preaching advice from 201–3
  West Saxon background of Boniface and 33, 42
David, *Vita altera* comparing Boniface to 180
De arte metrica (Bede) 103–4
De bono mortis (Ambrose of Milan) 195, 269
De ecclesiasticis officiis (Isidore of Seville) *80*, 93–95
De inuentione li[*tter*]*arum* (Hrabanus Maurus?) 122n77
De laudibus sanctae crucis (Hrabanus Maurus) 108n24
De metris (Aldhelm of Malmesbury) 114–15, 122
De natura rerum (Isidore of Seville) 78
De Trinitate (Augustine of Hippo) 75–76
De vita comtemplativa (Iulianus Pomerius) 229
de vries, herman 460
Denehard (correspondent of Boniface) 144–45
Deorulf (Thuringian leader) 280
Desiderius (king of Lombardy) 32
Dettic (Thuringian leader) 280
Dialogi (Pope Gregory I) 154
Diesenberger, Maximilian 315n82
dietary rules 16, 210, 216–17, 230, 291–93
Dietz, Johann Baptist (bishop of Fulda) 450–51, 456
Divine Office (liturgy of the hours) at Fulda 360–61
Dobdagrecus (bishop) 309
Dokkum
  See also martyrdom of Boniface at Dokkum
  1250th anniversary celebrations and opera (2004) 455, 466–70, *467*
  cult of Boniface at 5, 172, 181, 183, 351, 352–54, 367–72, 378
  miraculous well 353–54, 462
  missionary, remembrance of Boniface as 399
  modern veneration of Boniface in 431, 461–63, 465, 466–70
  Paul as patron saint of church of 180, 368, 400
  statue of Boniface at 462
  stone loaves miracle story 351, 461
Döllinger, Ignaz 414
Domberht (subject of epitaph in Boniface's *Enigmata*) 122
Donar (Thor; deity) 15–16, 165, 224n16, 293, 338
Donar oak (oak of Jupiter)
  in *Bonifatius* (2004 Dutch opera) 467–68
  ecological critiques associated with 458–60, 468
  felling of 15–16, 48, 54, 163–66, 281, 335
  French Revolution's Liberty Tree, identified with 436n29
  St Peter, church from timber of Donar oak dedicated to 165–66
  on prayer cards 429
  in Winfried's *Bonifatius lebt* 454
Donatus 101–3, 105, 109
Dorchester-on-Thames, first West Saxon see at 31
Dorestad 2, 331, 340–45, 348
Dorestad, battle of (696) 342, 343n44, 344–45
double monastic houses 35, 36n49, 71, 92
Drogo (mayor of the palace) 238
Dronke, Peter 136–37
Duddo (student of Boniface) 106, 112, 120n62, 137n77
Dümmler, Ernst 113n42, 117, 124, 130
Durand, Ursinus 205
Dutch and Boniface. *See* Frisia; Netherlands, modern veneration of Boniface in

Eadburg[a] (abbess of Minster-in-Thanet or Wimbo[u]rne) 42n89, 70, 120n62, 135, 137n77, 143, 148–49, 257n47
Eangyth of Thanet 42, 111, 113, 143, 146
Eagana kin group 307
East Germany 425–26, 450–51, 452n60
Eberhard and *Codex Eberhardi* 382, *401*, 401–2
Ebrard, Johannes Heinrich August 421, 436, 440
Ebroin (Frankish duke) 333
Ecclesiastical History (Bede) 28, 37, 38, 66, 154n17, 177n11, 179, 254n26, 332–33, 373
Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius of Caesarea) 154
Ecgbert of Rath Melsigi 50, 58
E[c]gburg[a] (abbess and correspondent of Boniface) 35n47, 112–13, 149
Ecgwine, *vita* of 241
Echternach 51, 279, 282
Eckenstein, Lina 68
Eddanus. *See* Heddo of Strasbourg
Egbert of Fulda 129, 189
Egbert of York 120n62, 202, 210–11, 333, 373
Egmond, Wolfert van 183
Eichstätt 20, 65, 307, 312–16
Eigil of Fulda 79–80, 358–59, 390–93, 396
  Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegili* 194
  Vita Sturmi 171, 174n3, 190, 193, *199*, 361, 379–80, 380n42, 381, 383, 390–93, 395, 401
Einhard (Carolingian historian) 261
St Elisabeth of Thuringia 426
Emerton, Ephraim 131, 150, 162n53
St Emmeram of Regensburg 307, 322–23
England
  See also British church; West Saxon background; *specific locations*
  Boniface's continuing links to 11–12
  church organization in 16, 17
  German Boniface cult from 1840s and conversion of 416
  medieval veneration of Boniface in 349, 372–75, 378
  modern veneration of Boniface in 428, 431–32, 464n113, 470
Enigmata (Aldhelm of Malmesbury) 108, 113–15, 122
Enigmata (Boniface) 113–19, *117*, *118*, 120
Enlightenment and Romantic veneration of Boniface in Germany 405–10
Eoba[n] (follower of Benedict, later bishop of Utrecht) 26, 127, 167, 168, 285, 349–50, 368–69, 370
Eorcenwald of London 36n49
episcopal sees, Boniface as organizer of 16–21
  See also specific sees, e.g. Mainz
episcopi vagantes 308, 309
Ercanbert (monk of Fulda) 358–59
Erdmann, David 420
Erembert of Freising 306–7
Eremwulf (heretic) 302–3
Eresburg 297
Erfurt 19, 20, 60, 62, 227, 261, 279, 287, 295, 297, 311, 369, 377, 426, 450–51
Erhard of Regensburg 307
Ermanrich of Ellwangen 398, 399
Eschwegen-Niederhone 290
Estinnes, Council of (743) 22, 223, 228, 232–34, 239, 243, 263, 294n147
Etymologiae (Isidore of Seville) 109–10, 114n44, 178
Europe and Europeanism
  at 1200th anniversary celebrations (1954) 451–53
  Apostle of Europe, Boniface as 404, 425, 427, 452n58, 456, 463
  Netherlands, veneration of Boniface in 463–64, 466
European Defense Community 453n61
European Economic Community 425
"Eusebius" (Hwætberht, abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow?) 113–14
Eusebius of Caesarea 154
Excarpsus Cummeani 3, 201, 211–18
Exeter, Boniface as child oblate/monk at 10, 28n5, 29, 32, 37–38, 99, 156
exile and loneliness, themes of, in correspondence 135, 142
exordium 135, 155, 156n28

Faremoutiers 64
feast of St Boniface
  100th anniversary celebrations (1855) of martyrdom 419–20, 435, 437

1200th anniversary celebrations (1954) of martyrdom 425–26, *443*, *444*, 450–53, 463–66
1250th anniversary celebrations (2004) of martyrdom *445*, 453–60, *455*, 466–70, *467*
liturgical celebration of, in middle ages 359–60, 362, 363–64, 368, 369–70, 373, 374, 375
Fehrenbacher, Bruno 432n7
Felix's *vita* of Guthlac 81
Fell, Christine 130, 136
feminist consciousness of women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles 9–97
field crosses, erected by Aldebert 238
Flaskamp, Franz 134, 306
Flechner, Roy 49
Fleury, Claude 143
Flobrigisus of Salzburg 306
Flodoard of Reims 279
Flora vase (Fulda) 441–42, *442*
Forthhere of Sherborne 42
Fosite (Frisian deity) 334, 336, 338
Francia 4, 249–69
See also specific locations
arrival of Boniface in 255–58
character of, in Boniface's day 249–51
under Charles Martel 250, 252, 255–56, 258–60
church and Christianity in 17, 252–53, 254–55, 260–62
crisis of barbarian kingdoms of the west and 251–55
decline of Merovingians and rise of Carolingians 251–52, 254
definition of 249
elevation of Pippin III to kingship 265–68
legacy of Boniface in 268–69
papal visit to 26
reform/reform councils and 259, 261–65
St Francis of Assisi 426
Franconia 13, 72, 78, 80, 84, 226, 411, 426
Frankish Council (747) 264–65
fraternitas absentium 146
Frauenberg 273, 292, 395
Freising 306–7, 310–11, 322, 323, 325
French Revolution 405–6, 436n29
Friedrich of Mainz 366, 371
Friesen, Bill 150n142, 153
Frisia 5, 327–54
See also martyrdom of Boniface at Dokkum; *specific locations*
in aftermath of Boniface's martyrdom 351–54
economy and trade 331–32, 341–42
final mission of Boniface to (753–754) 14, 327, 347–51
Fulda, Frisian donations to 349n68, 351–52
geography and topography *328*, 329–30
inhabitants of 330
initial visits of Boniface to (716, 719) 11, 39, 42, 327, 332, 345–47
language, literature, and letters 332–33, 342
in later *Vitae* 176, 177, 179, 180, 187
Lex Frisionum 330
map *328*
pagan and Christian religion in 333–40
political situation in 330–31
society and living conditions in 332
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* on 158–59, 162, 170–71
Willibrord's Anglo-Saxon mission at Utrecht 5, 11, 39, 133–34, 327, 331, 340–48
Fritzlar 16, 20, 54, 60, 285–86, 297, 302, 312, 379
frontier society. *See* pioneer society
Fulda
See also Sturm
after martyrdom of Boniface 351–54
correspondence of Boniface and 124, 126, 127–28, 131–32
De inuentione li[*tter*]*arum* from 122n77
establishment of monastery at 20–21, 54, 190, 234, 287–89, 316, 379–80, 381, 383
Flora vase 441–42, *442*
Frisian donations to 349n68, 351–52
Kitzingen library catalogue at 77–80
Leoba given responsibility for 36, 71
Leoba originally buried next to Boniface at 70–71, 78, 147
lost *vitae* of Boniface and 193–94
in monastic network 58–59, 61–62
Monte Cassino and 58–59

Fulda (cont.)
Nazi era, 1200th anniversary celebrations during 441–46
Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and 188–90
papal exemption for 127, 132, 380, 383
site of 131–32, 287–89
Fulda, veneration of Boniface at 5, 357–61, 379–403
altar dedicated to St Boniface 361, 393–94
charters, portrayal of Boniface in 382–85
Codex Eberhardi 382, *401*, 401–2
dedication of abbey church (819), translation of body of St. Boniface at 358–59, 393–94, 396
in Divine Office 360–61
feast of St Boniface, celebrations of 359–60, 362, 369–70, 403
in historical and necrological accounts kept at Fulda 385–88
Hrabanus Maurus and 358–60, 362, 363, 371, 376, 377, 380n6, 381, 393n60, 394, 395–401
Mainz, relationship with 380, 392
martyrdom, 1200th anniversary celebrations of (1954) 450, 451–52
modern veneration 422, 431, 432, 433, 437, 441–42, 450
monks' responses to 361, 381
patron of Fulda, Boniface as 359, 381, 403
Ratger's efforts to reform "regulations of St. Boniface" and 388–90
sites of memory associated with Boniface at Fulda 393–95, 457
spread of cult of Boniface and 377
statue of Boniface (1842) 417, 429, 434, 440
Sturm *versus* Boniface, as founder/patron/representative 379–82, 385, 387, 390–93, 400–403
tituli 394–95, 397, 399
tomb of Boniface 26, 171, 187, 357–59, 378, 380
Fulrad of Saint-Denis 25, 142, 243, 266, 296

Gadamer, Hans-Georg 268
Gallus (Irish missionary) 10
Ganz, David 55n47
Gaulskopf 297
Gauzbald of Regensburg 306–7, 320
Gemmulus (Cardinal-Deacon) 142–43
gender. *See* women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles
Georgics (Virgil) 178
Geraint (king of Dumnonia) 38
Gerchow, Jan 143
Gercken, Philipp 126
Gerhard (count) 242n81
Gerlach of Mainz 363
Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in 5–6, 404–27, 431–60
1100th anniversary celebrations (1855) of martyrdom 419–20, 435, 437
1200th anniversary celebrations (1954) of martyrdom 425–26, *443*, 450–53
1250th anniversary celebrations (2004) of martyrdom *445*, 453–60, *455*
academic study of Boniface 422–25, 436–37, 452–53
anti-revolutionary sentiment and 405, 413, 418, 419–20, 434, 436n29
Boniface Association (*Bonifatius-Verein*) 414–15, 417, 434, 437, 446, 447–49, *448*, *449*, 451
Catholic renewal/revival of 19th century and 418–19, 420, 433
in Cold War era 425–26, 427, *443*, *445*, *446*, 446–53, *448*, *449*
divisive figure for Catholics and Protestants, Boniface as 435–37
East Germany 425–26, 450–51, 452n60
as educational model 427
in Enlightenment and Romantic periods 405–10
evolution of 427
French Revolution and 405–6, 436n29
hymns 417–18
in interwar years 423–25
Kulturkampf and 422, 440
from late nineteenth century to WWI 421–23, 435–37
Luther as Apostle of Germany *versus* Boniface 5–6, 405, 409, 411–13, 416, 420–21, 423, 427
monuments and churches 434

in nationalist period 410–13, 433
Nazis and 424, 437–46, *438*, *439*, *442–45*, 459
pilgrimages 418, 419, 426
political utilization *versus* popular veneration 407, 419, 426
as popular cult 407, 419, 426
postwar reconstruction and *446*, 446–49, *449*
in religious press 417, 419, 426
Revolution of 1848 and 411, 413–17, 419–20
Sybel-Ficker controversy 413
unifying figure for Catholics and Protestants, Boniface as 433–34
Gerold of Bavaria 324
Gerold of Mainz 16, 186, 282, 294, 295
Gesta abbatum 392–93
Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae (Adam of Bremen) 372
Gesta regum Anglorum (William of Malmesbury) 138n83
Gesta Rodperti 323
Geuerich, Dieter 392
Gewilib of Mainz 23, 52, 186, 190, 234, 264, 295, 454
gifts and gift exchange 56, 135, 144, 145–46
Giles, John Allen 124, 130
Gisela (empress) 366
Glatthaar, Michael 3, 4, 204, 219, xiv
Glorie, Fr. 116n54, 117
Gockel, Michael 273
Godebald of Utrecht 369
Godescalc Evangelistary 375
Godlove, Shannon 1, 3, 141, 152, 174, xiv
Godolaus (Thuringian noble) 276
Goetz, Hans-Werner 46, 145
Good, Leanne 4–5, 299, xv
Goslar Precedence Dispute 189
Gottfrid of Alemannia 302
Gozwin, *Passio sancti Albani martyris* 366
grammarian, Boniface as. *See* poet, grammarian, and teacher, Boniface as
Grandisson, John de 374
Grau, Marion 459
Greenaway, George 137, 432n9
Gregorian register of letters 127
Gregory I the Great (pope)
books by, in English foundations in Germany 120
conversion of England and 12, 39, 464
Dialogi 154
earliest *vita* of 91–92
Homilies on the Gospels *80*, 90, 94
missionary vision of 49–50
as reformer 230
Regula pastoralis 241
Responsiones to Augustine of Canterbury 31, 91, 120n62, 213
"servant of the servants of God" (*servus servorum Dei*), use of 257
West Saxon background of Boniface and 37, 39
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 183, 187, 192
women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles and 91, 94
Gregory II (pope)
correspondence of Boniface and 127, 135, 142
Francia, Boniface in 254, 255, 256, 257
Hessia and Thuringia, Boniface in 281, 282
life of Boniface and 12, 15, 16
networks of Boniface and 62, 66
penance/penitentials and 213, 214, 215
reform/reform councils and 222, 224
West Saxon background of Boniface and 39, 44
Gregory III (pope)
Bavaria, Boniface in 303, 305–6, 307, 321
correspondence with Boniface 127, 134
Francia, Boniface in 254, 256–57, 258
life of Boniface and 16–17, 18
networks/missionizing of Boniface and 57, 58
penance/penitentials and 210, 215, 216
reform/reform councils and 223
West Saxon background of Boniface and 41
Gregory of Utrecht 52–53, 134, 174n3, 183, 285, 352, 368
Liudger of Münster, *Vita Gregorii* 52–53, 174n3, 184, *199*, 279n46, 284, 400
Grifo (mayor of the palace) 21, 143–44, 227, 295, 313, 314, 319

Grimo of Corbie (archbishop of Rouen) 22, 23, 212, 221, 222, 226, 234, 243, 264
Grimoald (son of Pippin II) 343n44
Grimoald of Bavaria (son of Duke Theodo) 302, 322
Gumley, Privilege of (749) 240–41
Gundhareus (Thuringian noble) 276
Gundwin (deacon) 60
Guntram (brother of Hrabanus Maurus) 397
Guntram (nephew of Hrabanus Maurus) 398
Gun[t]za manuscripts 76, 77, *80*, 80–84
Guthlac (Anglo-Saxon saint) 81–82

Haarländer, Stephanie 185
Hadeloga (abbess of Kitzingen) 74
Hadrian I (pope) 244, 323
hagiographies. *See vitae*
Hahn, Heinrich 124, 130, 134n61, 206
Haistulf of Mainz 358–59, 399
Halbertsman, Herrius 462n99
Hallenbeck, Jan T. 267n103
Haller, Johannes 424–25
Hammer, Carl I. 306, 314n77
Hartbert of Sens 22, 23, 234, 264
Hatto (abbot of Fulda) 361
Hauck, Albert 132, 206, 436–37, 440
Hausrath, Adolph 417
Heahburg (Bugga; correspondent of Boniface) 42, 75, 111–12, 113, 134–35, 137n77, 138, 143, 146, 149
Heddo of Strasbourg (Adda/Eddanus?) 19, 226, 227, 303, 311n61
Heden (duke of Thuringia) 62, 272, 273–78, 280–82, 2254n16
Hegesippus 154
Heidenheim 4, 289, 300, 312, 316, 322
Helena (mother of Constantine) 420
Helmigaud (layman under Pippin III) 237
Hengstenberg, Wilhelm 421
heretics and heresy
  Aldebert 134, 186, 230, 232, 234, 237, 238, 319
  Arianism 195
  in Bavaria 299
  British church and 37
  Catholics considering Protestants as 416, 418
  Clemens/Clement 134, 204, 230, 232, 234, 319
  Eremwulf (heretic) 302–3
  Latin baptismal formula, mangling of 119
  rejection of patristic authority as 112n35
  of Thuringians 282
  universal salvation 204
  Virgil of Salzburg accused by Boniface of 24, 318
Hermann (Arminius; Germanic chieftain) 406, 411, 458–59
Hermann, John P. 170–71
Hermanus Contractus 376
Herren, Michael 136
Hersfeld 20, 377
Hertford, synod of (672) 37
Hessia and Thuringia 4, 270–98
  arrival and early years of Boniface in 14, 279–85
  Christianity before Boniface in 276–79
  consolidation of Boniface's position in 14–16, 285–89, *288*
  Donar oak (oak of Jupiter), felling of 15–16, 48, 54, 163–66, 281, 335
  final years of Boniface in 294–97
  Frankish influence in 13
  geographical limits and maps of 270–71, *274*, *288*
  letters of introduction to 18, 280, 281
  paganism and conversion in 14–16, 280–82, 289–94
  Saxon campaigns, effects of 284–85, 294–95
  Saxons invading 275, 296
  situation and conditions before Boniface's arrival 270–79
  in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* 163n55
Hewald and Hewald (English missionaries) 61
Hezil of Hildesheim 189
Hildegar of Cologne 133
Hildegard (wife of Charlemagne) 71, 375
Hildegard of Bingen 96, 365
Hiltrud (daughter of Charles Martel and wife of Odilo of Bavaria) 311, 319
Himmler, Heinrich 459
Hincmar of Reims 245

Historia vel Gesta Francorum 9, 24, 242
Hitler, Adolf 437, 441–43, 446
Hofheim 397
Holdsworth, Christopher 28n5
Holland. *See* Frisia; Netherlands, modern
veneration of Boniface in
Hollis, Stephanie 147n129
Holson, Frederick 167
Holy Tunic of Trier 420
Holzkirchen 397
Homilies on the Gospels (Pope Gregory I) *80*, 90, 94
Horner, Shari 148n130
horse burials 290–91
horseflesh, penance for consumption of 210, 216–17
Hrabanus Maurus
correspondence of Boniface and 123, 126, 131, 132, 147n128
De inuentione li[*tter*]*arum* possibly by 122n77
De laudibus sanctae crucis 108n24
in *Gesta abbatum* 392
later *vitae* of Boniface and 192, 194
Leoba, promotion of cult of 71n15, 387, 398
Martyrologium 72n21, 376, 396, 398n86
missionary, remembrance of Boniface as 399–400
sermon for feast of St Boniface 360, 396, 399
at translation of body of St Boniface (819) 358–59, 396
veneration of St Boniface and 358–60, 362, 363, 371, 376, 377, 380n6, 381, 393n60, 394, 395–401
Hucbald, *Vita Lebwini* 184
Hucbert (Hugobert; duke of Bavaria) 257, 299, 302–3
Hugo (Thuringian nobleman) 284, 286
Hugobert (Hucbert; duke of Bavaria) 257, 299, 302–3
human sacrifice 292, 337–38, 344
Humbert of Büraburg 286
Hünenburg 273
Huoggi of Fulda 369
Huosi kin group 307, 310
Hwætberht ("Eusebius?"), abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow 113–14, 120n62
Hwita of Lichfield 241
Hygeburg of Heidenheim 29, 285
Vita Wynnebaldi et Willibaldi 65, 76, 174n3, 188, *198*, 295, 312, 315n78, 321

iconoclastic controversy 254
Ignatius of Antioch 391
Illyricus, Flacius 130
images of Boniface
as elderly bishop 428–31, *430*, *445*, *448*, 449, 460–61
on postage stamps, *443–45*, 452, 466
on prayer cards 428–31, *430*, 436, *446*
statue of Boniface (1842) at Fulda 417, 429, 434, 440
younger representations of 437–40, *438*, *439*, 447–50, *449*, 454, *455*, 461, 466
imitatio, in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* 155–56, 157
imitatio apostolorum 163, 166, 168
Immina (abbess of Würzburg) 73n26
incest/consanguinity rules 16, 39, 127, 213–14, 233, 238
Indiculus superstitionem et pagianarum 215, 224–25, 229, 289, 294, 339, 348
Ine (king of Wessex) 10, 32n29, 42, 43, 263n79, 266
Ingolstadt 315
Insular script 12
Iohannis celsi rimans misteria caeli 121
Irish and Ireland
See also British church; *specific Irish missionaries*
abbots and abbesses exercising episcopal liturgical powers in 306, 308–9
Boniface's suspicion of 39
Dagobert II (Merovingian ruler) exiled to Ireland 251
kings, anointing of 266
missionary culture and networks of 5, 34, 38–39, 49–50, 66, 158, 160–61, 253–54, 278, 318, 341
monastic culture of 158, 253
penitentials of 210–14

Irish and Ireland (cont.)
Roman and Irish ecclesiastical cultures, clash between 309, 318–19
sermons from 207
syncretism of Irish folklore and Christian beliefs 318
women not included in missions of 34
Irvine, Martin 100n4
Isidore of Seville 120
De ecclesiasticis officiis *80*, 93–95
De natura rerum 78
Etymologiae 109–10, 114n44, 178
Synonyms *80*, 82–83, 195
Islam
Arab expansion into Europe 17, 253–54
in modern dramatic interpretations of Boniface 461, 468
Isle of Wight 30, 31
Iulianus Pomerius 229

Jaffé, Philipp 124, 125n9, 126, 130
Jahn, Joachim 307, 310, 311n58
Jansen (archbishop of Utrecht) 462
Jarnut, Jörg 238n58
Jelsma, Auke 137–38, 468n125
Jerome 76, 78, 91, 120, 142, 149, 230
Johannes of Salzburg 306, 309, 320
John Paul II (pope) 403n101, 463n106
Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani et eius socii* 64, 65
Joseph of Freising 320
Jungdo (*Jungdeutsche Orden*) 437–40n35
Jupiter, oak of. *See* Donar oak
Jutes, West Saxon expansion into lands of 31

Kaiser, Reinhold 265
Karlburg 73, 74, 77, *80*, 81–85, 90–94, 96
Karlsruhe Codex 125, 127–28, 129, 132, 190
Katholischen Jugend- und Jungmannervereine Deutschlands conference (Fulda, 1923) 437–40, *438*
Keep, David 432n9
Kehl, Petra 5, 172, 184, 194, 357, 381, 432, xv
Kehrer, Valentin 414
Kemp, Kornelius 367n60, 368n67
Kesterburg 273, 276, 290
Ketteler, Wilhelm Emmanuel von (bishop of Mainz) 416–17, 435
Kilian of Würzburg 160, 278, 411
Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands (Hauck) 436
Kitzingen 20, 35, 73, 74–80, *80*, 83–90, *87*, 92, 94, 96, 186, 392
Kitzingen Pauline Epistles, crucifixion miniature 86–88, *87*
Klapper, Joseph 450–51
Klopstock, Friedrich Gottlieb 458
Kolb, Augustin *439*, 440
Körntgen, Ludger 212n39, 214n61, 222n11
Kotková, Olga 460
Kött, Christoph Florentius 412
Kretzschmar, Harald 459–60
Krüger, Jürgen 436
Külb, Philipp Hedwig 124, 130n36
Kulturkampf 422, 440
Kunibert of Cologne 160
Kylie, Edward 131

Lamazan, Josef von 419–20
Lantfrid of Alemannia 319
Lapidge, Michael 114, 120, 373
later *vitae* of Boniface 3, 174–200
knowledge of life of Boniface provided by 9
lost *vitae* 193–94, 393n60
on martyrdom of Boniface 176, 181–83, 184–85, 186, 187, 195–200
miracle stories and cult of Boniface in 182, 183, 187, 188, 191–92
Paul and Boniface compared 175, 177n11, 180–81, 182, 191, 192
personality and character of Boniface in 174–75
Ragyndrudis Codex as book held over head by Boniface at martyrdom 195–200, 428
table of instances of Boniface in medieval saints' lives *196–99*
Vita altera Bonifatii 175–84, 185, 192, 195, *196*, 329, 334, 351, 352, 368, 369, 371–72, 462n97
Vita tertia Bonifatii 175, 184–85, 188, *196*, 352, 368n68, 371–72, 462n97
Vita quarta Bonifatii 171, 185–87, 190, 191, *197*, 294n145, 362–63, 364
Vita quinta Bonifatii 175, 188, *197*

Vita sexta Bonifatii (*See* Otloh of St Emmeram, *Vita Bonifatii*)
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 175, 184, 185–86, 188–89, 195
Latin
Ars grammatica of Boniface and 105
for Germanic and Celtic speakers 101, 105
Old English and 75n41, 114, 135, 136–37, 155
tradition of indispensability of 111
as universal language 66
Vulgate 100, 142
Lauterhofen 315
Law, Vivien 102, 104
Legenda Exoniensis 374–75
Lehmann, Karl, Cardinal 456
Leo, Heinrich 421
Leo III (pope) 325
Leo IV (pope) 361
Leo IX (pope) 129, 189
Leoba 70–72
Aldhelm's *De metris* used by 115
burial site(s) of 70–71, 78, 147, 398
correspondence with Boniface 112, 115, 147–48
in Hessia and Thuringia 285
in historical and necrological accounts kept at Fulda 387–88
Hrabanus Maurus promoting cult of 71n15, 387, 398
Isidore of Seville's *Synomyns* and 82
as kinswoman of Boniface 29, 30, 36, 56–57, 118n56, 147–48
literary and stylistic borrowings in correspondence of 115, 136, 148
Lull writing to 60
Old English style elements in letters of 146
Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae* 70, 71, 75, 89, 147n128, 398, 399n91
scriptoria run by 75
at Tauberbischofsheim 35, 60, 71, 73–74, 186
as teacher 71–72
Thecla's kinship with 36n50
West Saxon background of Boniface and 29, 30, 34, 35, 36
Leofgyth. *See* Leoba
Lerner, Gerda 69–70
letters of Boniface. *See* correspondence of Boniface
Leuthere (bishop of Wessex) 32
Levigne, Hubert 466
Levison, Wilhelm 153, 185, 371, 423, 437
Lex Frisionum 330
Libellus Scottorum 210
Libellus Virgilii 309
Liber Pontificalis 9, 301, 321
Liber Vitae of Salzburg 306, 307, 322
Liborius (missionary) 411
Liebenau 290
Lifshitz, Felice 2–3, 68, xv
liturgy
calendars, liturgical, and medieval veneration of Boniface 359, 362, 363, 370, 373, 374–75, 377
Divine Office (liturgy of the hours) at Fulda 360–61
feast of St Boniface, liturgical celebration of 359–60, 362, 363–64, 368, 369–70, 373, 374, 375
litanies, invocations, and antiphons mentioning Boniface 365, 370, 373–74
women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles, liturgical and "clerical" practices of 91–95
Liudger of Münster 24, 134, 284, 367, 377, 411
Altfrid of Münster, *Vita Liudgeri* 61, 176, 183, 184, 333
Vita Gregorii 52–53, 174n3, 184, *199*, 279n46, 284, 400
Liudo (Bavarian bishop) 303, 309, 310
Liutpurga (wife of Tassilo of Bavaria) 32
lives of saints. *See vitae*
Löffler, Friedrich Christian 405
loneliness and exile, themes of, in correspondence 135, 142
Lorsch 109, 122, 266, 364n42, 377, 388
Lortz, Joseph 123, 138
lotium 363, 380
Louis [Ludwig] the Pious (Carolingian ruler) 244, 384, 424
Lübeck, Konrad 361n22
Lucius (pope) 244

Ludwig I of Bavaria 434
Luft, Robert, *Die Verchristung der Deutschen* 441, 459
Lull of Mainz
on Æthelbald 241
Aldhelmian style, influence of 155
body of Boniface retrieved by 350–51
Breviarum Sancti Lulli 286–87
correspondence of Boniface and 9, 48, 60, 123, 125, 128, 130, 132, 144–45, 147, 365
female associates of 35, 36, 70, 147
Hersfeld, establishment of abbey at 20
in Hessia and Thuringia 285, 286n89
in historical and necrological accounts kept at Fulda 386, 387
in later *vitae* 187, 190, 192
learning poetry and grammar from Boniface 120–21
Leoba, writing to 60
literary and stylistic borrowings in correspondence of 136
on miraculous well at Dokkum 353–54
prayer requests of 58
Simon and Jude, devotion to 82
in social network of Boniface 57
Sturm, quarrelling with 190
as successor to Boniface 25, 187, 242
veneration of Boniface and 357, 362, 363, 365, 372, 377, 378
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 20, 27, 65, 152–55, 353–54, 357, 372
lunar eclipses in Boniface's Germany 224–25
Lupus of Ferrières 242, 285, 398, 399n91
Luther, Martin 5–6, 405, 409, 411–13, 416, 420–21, 423, 427, 435–36, 456
Lutherans 129, 130, 405, 420, 421, 436, 451n54
Lutterbach, Hubertus 456–57
Luxeuil 55, 64, 195

Mabillon, Jean 205
Macy, Gary 92
Madelinus (Frankish moneyer) 342
Máel Muire Ua Gormáin (Marianus Gorman) 376
Magdeburg Centuries 129
Maildubh (Irish teacher at Malmesbury) 38
Main-Franconia 13, 226
Mainz
body of Boniface and 171, 362–63, 380
as episcopal see 132–33, 234, 279, 294–95, 316, 321, 410
Fulda's veneration of Boniface and 380, 392
medieval veneration of Boniface in 362–67
modern veneration of Boniface in 431, 432, 433
Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* and 188–90
relics of Boniface at 267, 362–63, 380
Vita quarta Bonifatii and 185–87
in *Vita altera* 180, 183
Manno (Bavarian bishop) 310
map of places in which Boniface was active *xviii*
Marianus Scotus, *Chronicon* 366–67
Marius Victorinus 122
Markus, Robert 63
marriage
barren couples 214–15
incest/consanguinity rules 16, 39, 127, 213–14, 233, 238
sexual behaviour in 214–15
Martène, Edmond 205
Martial of Limoges 65
Martin of Tours 65, 164, 165, 175, 180, 229, 346, 426
martyrdom of Boniface at Dokkum 3, 5, 26, 39, 327, 349–51
100th anniversary celebrations (1855) 419–20, 435, 437
1200th anniversary celebrations (1954) 425–26, *443*, *444*, 450–53, 463–66
1250th anniversary celebrations (2004) *445*, 453–60, *455*, 466–70, *467*
aftermath of 351–54
book held over head by Boniface at 176, 182n49, 185, 195–200, 428, 431
immediate commemoration of 349, 351
in later *vitae* of Boniface 176, 181–83, 184–85, 186, 187, 195–200
modern dramatic interpretations of 454, 455, 467–68

Pippin III's invasion of Frisia following 171, 187, 350
prayer cards depicting 428–31, *430*
reform/reform councils and 243
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* on 161, 162, 166–71, 349–51
martyrologies
Bede, *Martyrologium* 373, 376
Gozwin, *Passio sancti Albani martyris* 366
Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium* 72n21, 376, 396, 398n86
by Ado von Vienne and Usuard 376
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, martyrological entries based on 376
Martyrologium Fuldense 369n69, 400
Mary, mother of God. *See* Virgin Mary
Mary Magdalen 90, 93–95
Matham, Jacob 460–61
Maude, Kathryn 151n143
Maurer, Karl 441–43
McClure, Judith 254n26
McKitterick, Rosamond 47, 267n103
Mechthild of Magdeburg 96
Medard of Soissons 65
medieval veneration of Boniface 5, 357–78
See also Fulda, veneration of Boniface at
in Dokkum and Utrecht 367–72, 378
in England 349, 372–75, 378
feast of St Boniface, celebrations of 359–60, 362, 363–64, 368, 369–70, 373, 374, 375
litanies, invocations, and antiphons 364–65, 370, 373–74
in liturgical calendars 359, 362, 363, 370, 373, 374–75, 377
in Mainz 362–67
in martyrologies 373, 376
patron saint, Boniface as 359, 370–71, 373
personal name, Boniface as 371
private/personal devotion to Boniface 371
relics 357, 359, 362–63, 367, 368–69, 377, 396–98
spread beyond cult centers 375–77
vitae (*See* later *vitae* of Boniface; Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*)
Meeder, Sven 319
Meens, Rob 3, 138n79, 142n100, 201, xv
Megingoz of Würzburg 27–28, 65, 152, 153, *196*, 362, 377
metrical treatise by Boniface 101
micro-Christendoms, concept of 46
Migne, J.-P. 205
Milo of Trier and Reims 22–23, 52, 258, 260, 283, 453
Milosz, Czeslaw 249
Milret of Worcester 241, 362, 372, 378
Minster-in-Thanet 42n89, 70, 84, 111, 115
miracle stories
in later *vitae* 182, 183, 187, 188, 191–92
stone loaves at Dokkum 351, 461
well at Dokkum 353–54, 462
in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* 163–64, 172
missionizing and missionary impulse
See also paganism and conversion; women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles
Apostle of the Germans/Germany, Boniface as 192–93, 249, 399, 403, 411, 413, 425, 427, 429, 432, 433, 443, 456
of Boniface 10–16, 39–44
of British church 39–41
in correspondence of Boniface 141–43
grammatica and 119–22
Hrabanus Maurus and remembrance of Boniface as missionary 399–400
as *imitatio apostolorum* 163, 166, 168
local communities, infiltrating 59–64
martyrdom stories and 53
modern *versus* medieval conceptions of 162–63
networks, arising from 49–54
peregrinatio, concept of 10, 39–40, 43, 142–43, 158–59, 181, 258, 341
resources for missionary work, obtaining 54–57
revolution of 1848 in Germany and 414–16
West Saxon background of Boniface and 39–44
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* on 40–41, 158–63
of Willibrord 39, 40–41, 50–52

Mochinger 307
modern veneration of Boniface 428–71
See also Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in; images of Boniface; Netherlands, modern veneration of Boniface in
cultural, national, historical, and financial aspects of 433
in England 428, 431–32, 464n113, 470
prayer cards, representations of Boniface on 428–31, *430*, 436, *446*, 452
surviving cults 431–33
monasticism
See also specific monks, nuns, monasteries, and abbeys
Bavaria, monastic bishops in 306, 308–9
Boniface, monastic landscape developed by 20–21
Capitula de invasoribus monasteriorum 229
double monastic houses 35, 36n49, 71, 92
Irish and Ireland, monastic culture of 158, 253
networks, monastic 61–62
Odilo of Bavaria's monastic foundations 311–13, 315
pioneer society and 50
proprietary churches and monasteries 77, 229, 244, 320, 324
stabilitas, ideal of 105, 237
Monte Cassino 19, 20, 41, 57, 58–59, 144, 312, 390
Moore, Michael Edward 162n50, 249, xv–xvi
Mostert, Marco 5, 134, 137, 224n16, 289n104, 327, 461, xvi
Mother Theresa (St Theresa of Calcutta) 426
Mott, Michael 457
mound burials 290–91
Muench, Aloisius Joseph 426, 450
Muhlhausen 290
Müllenhoff, Karl 206
Müller, Winfried 435
Munich Codex 125, 126–27
Münster 293n126, 377
Murbach 377
Murbach Annals 242
Muslims. *See* Islam
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Association) 425, 451, 466
Nazis and Boniface 424, 437–46, *438*, *439*, *442–45*, 459
Netherlands, modern veneration of Boniface in 428, 432–33, 460–70
1200th anniversary celebrations (1954) *444*, 463–66
1250th anniversary celebrations and opera (2004) 455, 466–70, *467*
Catholics and Catholicism 460, 462–65, 469, 470
early modern period through early 20th century 460–63
pilgrimage of 1926 463, 465, 466
Protestants and Protestantism 460, 465, 467n122, 468n125, 469
networks 1–2, 46–67
of commemoration 58–59
correspondence of Boniface and 47–48, 141, 150
England, Boniface's continuing links to 11–12
familial connections 56–57, 61, 285
hagiographic networks 2, 48, 64–66
language and 66
in local communities 59–64
methodological issues 47–49
missionary impulse arising from 49–54
monastic networks 61–62
in pioneer society 50, 59
prayer, bonds based on 57–59
resources for missionary work, obtaining 54–57
significance of 46–47, 66–67
sociopolitical networks 62–63
teacher, formed by Boniface as 112–13
Neuburg 310
Neuss, Wilhelm 444–46
Neustria 232, 237, 251, 252, 254, 264, 345
New Year celebrations 216
Nhutscelle. *See* Nursling
Ní Mhaonaigh, Máire 49
Nithard 112, 136, 138–39
Noble, Thomas F. X. 131
Nolte, Cordula 56n54
Nonnberg 323
Noomen, Paul 137

Nordgau 307, 315, 315n78, 316
North Atlantic Treaty Association (NATO) 425, 451, 466
Notker of St. Gall 376
Nürnberger, August Josef 124, 206
Nursling (Nhutscelle), Boniface as monk at 10, 11, 29–30, 32, 33, 42, 99–105, 156

Oadalhart (Bavarian bishop) 310
oak of Jupiter. *See* Donar oak
Oakley, Francis 267n103
Ochsenfurt 35, 73, 392
Odilo of Bavaria
  appointee Virgil of Salzburg accused of heresy by Boniface 24
  Boniface's missionary activities under 299, 303, 311–13, 315, 317, 318
  death of 319
  ecclesiastical organization under 18, 306–7
  expulsion from and return to Bavaria 311, 312
  Frankish attack on Bavaria and 314–15
  installation as Duke by Charles Martel 302
  monastic foundations of 311–13, 315
  new papal legate for Bavaria, seeking 314
  reform/reform councils under 222–23, 257
  romani at court of 306
  St Maximilian, controversy with Virgil of Salzburg over cell of 309
Oeren 73, 345
Offermann, Rudolf 437
Ohrdruf 15, 20, 285–86, 289, 392
Old English language and literary style
  in correspondence 135, 136–37, 146, 147
  Latin, interplay with 75n41, 114, 135, 136–37, 155
  networks of Boniface and 66
  in poetry and grammatical compositions of Boniface 114
  in Willibald's *Vita Bonafatii* 155, 166, 167, 169, 170
Old Saxon Baptismal Vow/Utrecht baptismal promise 224n16, 338
Optatus (abbot of Monte Cassino) 58–59
Orchard, Andy 114, 115, 116, 117, 118n56, 130, 134–35, 136
Ordinale Exoniense 374
ordo, Boniface's devotion to concept of 250, 262
Osred of Northumbria 240
Otloh of St Emmeram, *Vita Bonifatii* 66, 188–93, *197*
  on Boniface as spiritual father of Germania 192–93
  on book held over head by Boniface at martyrdom 195
  correspondence of Boniface and 123, 126, 128, 129, 132, 188, 190–91
  on Hessia and Thuringia 284, 285, 286
  lost *vitae* and 194
  miracle stories in 191–92
  other works by Otloh 189n86
  Paul and Boniface compared 191, 192
  saintly lineage of Boniface in 192–93
  Vita altera and 192
  Vita quarta Bonifatii as source for 185, 192, 364
  Willibald's *Vita* and 175, 190
Otto of Regensburg 189

Padberg, Lutz E. von 47, 138–39, 141, 142n100, 143, 144, 207, 346n57, 428n1
paganism and conversion
  See also Donar oak
  associations between Christians and non-Christians 211
  baptisms, improper 16, 119, 317
  basic tenets of Christian faith for 218
  Carolingian opponents labelled as pagans 321
  collection of events and processes, conversion as 48–49
  Daniel of Winchester on 53, 141, 143, 202–3
  in Frisia 333–40
  in Hessia and Thuringia 14–16, 280–82, 289–94
  human sacrifice 292, 337–38, 344
  Indiculus superstitionem et pagianarum 215, 224–25, 229, 289
  Old Saxon Baptismal Vow renouncing specific pagan gods/Utrecht baptismal promise 224n16, 338

prayer, power of 58
reforming anti-pagan decrees 223–25, 228, 231, 233–34
Saxon persistence of 12–13, 14
syncretism and survival of pagan practices 16, 22, 36, 63–64, 215–16, 231, 290–93, 318
universal salvation 204
in *Vita altera Bonifatii* 177–79
Wessex, conversion of 31–32
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* on 160–61, 281
Palmer, James T. 2–3, 46, 75, 154, 161, 165, 181, 192, 305n26, xvi
papacy
See also specific popes
Boniface as legate of Apostolic See 18, 23, 25, 161–62, 219, 222, 226, 257n43, 264, 267, 316, 317, 327, 366, 388, 402
Roman and Irish ecclesiastical cultures, clash between 309, 318–19
Roman primacy, Boniface's commitment to 254, 255, 256, 261
Sergius as papal legate 314, 316–17
Pape, Matthias 451
Das Papsttum. Idee und Wirklichkeit (Haller) 424–25
Paris, Council of (614) 221
Paris, Treaty of (1954) 453n61
Parkes, Malcolm 121n67
Parsons, David 313n69
Passau 305–6, 307, 319, 320, 322, 323
Passio sancti Albani martyris (Gozwin) 366
passion narratives
Apostolic Passionary, women's monastery of Karlberg *80*, 81–85
Boniface's knowledge of 53
libellus, women's monastery of Kitzingen *80*, 83–86, 94
sent to Boniface by Bugga 75
Patzold, Steffen 133
Patrick (saint) 39
patristic literature
in English foundations in Germany 120
as missionary resources 55, 112n35
sea journeys in 167
women monastics producing copies of 90
Patrologia Latina 130, 205
Paul (apostle)
Alcuin's poem comparing Boniface to 368
Boniface identified by female followers with 89
Boniface visiting tomb of 12
Boniface's self-identification with 89, 141
Dokkum, as patron saint of church of 180, 368
Kitzingen Pauline Epistles, crucifixion miniature 86–88, *87*
later *vitae* comparing Boniface with 175, 177n11, 180–81, 182, 191, 192
Thecla (follower of St Paul) 88–89
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* comparing Boniface with 156–58, 160, 163, 167, 173, 180
Pehthelm of Whithorn 120n62
Pelteret, David A. E. 109
penance and penitentials 209–18
Paenitentiale Oxoniense II 211
peregrinatio 10, 39–40, 43, 142–43, 158–59, 181, 258, 341
Peter (apostle)
Boniface associated with, in *vitae* 177, 192, 400
Boniface visiting tomb of 12, 201
Boniface's devotion to 254, 261
church from timber of Donar oak dedicated to 165–66
Peters, H. 462n99
Petronax (abbot of Monte Cassino) 58
Petto (Bavarian bishop) 310–11
Pez, Bernhard 205
Pfaff, Johann Leonhard (Bishop of Fulda) 406, 407
Pfalzel 52, 73
Pfingstberg 273
Phocas 105
Phyphylo. *See* Vivilo of Passau
Pilitrud (wife of Grimoald of Bavaria) 302
pioneer society
monastic impulse in 50
networks and 50, 59
in West Saxon region 33–36
Pippin II of Herstal (mayor of the palace) 11, 51, 62, 252, 255, 273, 299, 342, 345
Pippin III (mayor of the palace)

Bavaria under 307, 309n44, 314, 317, 319, 320, 322
correspondence of Boniface with 140
elevation to kingship 241–44, 249, 265–68, 320, 367
Francia under 262, 264–68
Frisia under 347
Hadeloga as half-sister of 74
Hessia and Thuringia under 295–96
on interment of Boniface's body 171
martyrdom of Boniface and Frisian invasion of 171, 187
in Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* 190
in power struggle after death of Charles Martel 21
reform/reform councils and 3, 21, 22, 24–25, 219, 221, 226, 228, 232, 234–39, 241–44
relationship of Boniface with 4
Saxon military campaigns of 295, 296
sociopolitical networks and 62, 63
Sturm exiled by 392
Utrecht, charter confirming Boniface's jurisdiction over 26
women in Anglo-Saxon monastic circles and 74
Pirmin 9, 188
Pius X (pope) 447n49
Pius XII (pope) 425, 447n49
Plum, Josef *446*, 447
poet, grammarian, and teacher, Boniface as 2, 99–122
on archaic usage 103–4
Ars grammatica treatise 101–6, 109, 120
Caesurae uersuum 109–10, 113
Enigmata 113–19, *117*, *118*, 120
metrical treatise 101
missionary work of Boniface and 119–22
networks formed by Boniface as teacher 112–13
at Nursling (Nhutscelle) 99–105
reputation of Boniface as teacher 41–42, 111
Versibus en iuuenis (figured poem) 106–9, *107*, 112, 115, 120
Vienna Codex, Aldhelmian poems of Æthilwald in 125n9, 128
women, Boniface as teacher of 111–12
political saint in Germany, Boniface as. *See* Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in
Pompeius, works of 109, 122
Portiforium of St Wulstan 374
Post, Paul 462, 470
prayer
correspondence, prayer requests in 57–58, 143–45
networks based on 57–59
prayer cards, representations of Boniface on 428–31, *430*, 436, *446*, 452
preaching of Boniface 3, 201–10, 217–18, 233n46
precaria 233, 244, 258, 382
Prinz, Friedrich 267n103
Priscian 102–3, 105
Privilege of Gumley (749) 240–41
pro anima donations 56
property, ecclesiastical, control of. *See* reform and reform councils
proprietary churches and monasteries 77, 229, 244, 320, 324
Protestants and Protestantism
in Germany (*See* Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in)
Lutherans 129, 130, 405, 420, 421, 436, 451n54
in Netherlands 460, 465, 467n122, 468n125, 469
Reformation 370, 378, 405, 413, 416, 417, 420, 421, 431, 434, 435
Reformed Church 405, 421, 460
Provence 253, 314
Prudentius 116
Psalter of Charlemagne 375
Psalter of Wolbodo 370n83
pseudo-Isidorian decretals 244, 308
pseudo-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni* 337–38, 344
Psychomachia (Prudentius) 116
Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius 106–8

St Quirinus, translation of body of 310n55

Raaijmakers, Janneke 5, 194, 379, xvi
Radbod (Frisian *dux*) 11, 14, 159n41, 224n16, 330, 336–37, 341–45, 454, 461

Radbod of Utrecht (bishop) 175–76, 184, 351, 369, 371
Radobod (layman under Pippin III) 237
Ragyndrudis Codex 83, 192n104, 194–200, 269n115, 428
Ranke, Leopold von 437
Räß, Andreas (bishop of Strasbourg) 416
Ratger of Fulda 194, 388–90, 392, 393n63, 395
Rath Melsigi (Clonmelsh) 40
Ratleik of Seligenstadt 396
Rau, Johannes 456
Rau, Reinhold 127, 129, 130, 132, 146n123, 150–51, 206, 256n41, 263n81
reform and reform councils 3, 219–46
See also Concilium Germanicum
Admonitio Generalis 208–9, 325
anti-pagan decrees 223–25, 228, 231, 233–34
Auxerre (692–696) 220
in Bavaria/Alemannia/Central Germany 222–23
Capitula de invasoribus ecclesiarum 228–29, 239–40, 241
Capitula de invasoribus monasteriorum 229
Chalon-sur-Saône (647/653) 220–21
Charlemagne and 3, 244, 300, 324–25
chronological table of Boniface's activity at, 245–46
Clofesho (747) 240–41
Estinnes (743) 22, 223, 228, 232–34, 239, 243, 263, 294n147
Francia and 259, 261–65
Frankish Council (747) 264–65
Frankish synod (745) 23
Gumley, Privilege of (749) 240–41
Indiculus superstitionem et pagianarum 224–25, 229
letters regarding 238–41
in life of Boniface 21–25
Paris (614) 221
Pippin III's elevation to kingship and 241–44
Saint-Jean-de-Losne (673/675) 220
Saint-Pierre-de-Granon (673/675) 220
secular powers, support of 219–22
Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae 224, 228, 229
Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses 228–32, 233
Soissons (744) 22–23, 235–38, *236*, 242, 243
Ver, decrees of (755) 235, 243
whole realm of Francia, councils for 238–39
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* on 158–63, 222
Reformation 370, 378, 405, 413, 416, 417, 420, 421, 431, 434, 435
Reformed Church 405, 421, 460
Regenfrid (bishop) 22, 226
Regensburg 306–7, 320, 323–24, 415
Regibert of Mainz 279n44
Regula pastoralis (Pope Gregory I) 241
Reichenau 65, 376, 377, 384, 385n27, 387nn37–38
Reichenau manuscript 65
Reichsunmittelbarkeit 74
Reinerding, Franz Heinrich 412
relics of Boniface 351, 357, 359, 362–63, 367, 368–69, 377, 396–98, 461, 470–71
Responsiones of Gregory I to Augustine of Canterbury 31, 91, 120n62, 213
Reuter, Timothy 325–26, 432n9
Reuther, Rosemary Radford 96
Revolution of 1848 in Germany 411, 413–17, 419–20
Riché, Pierre 266
Richter, Gregor 358, 361n22, 437
Ricoeur, Paul 268
Riess, Florian 412
Ritant of Fulda 188
Rohing (abbot of Fulda) 361
Rohnstedt 290
Roman church. *See* Papacy
Romantic and Enlightenment veneration of Boniface in Germany 405–10
Romanus 102–3
Rome
Boniface visiting 12, 15, 18, 41, 112n33, 201, 223, 255, 285, 303
pagan New Year celebrations in 216
Rome, Treaty of (1957) 425
Rosenberg, Alfred, *The Myth of the 20th Century* 424

Rudolf of Fulda 126, 131, 132, 147, 397
Vita Leobae 70, 71, 75, 89, 147n128, 398, 399n91
Rule of St Benedict 20, 22, 28, 30, 234, 289n43, 290
Rupert of Salzburg 306
St Rupert of Worms 322, 323
Russell, Jeffrey 134
Ruthard (monk) 194n115
Rydolt (Bavarian bishop) 303

sacrifice
animal sacrifice and consumption of sacrificial animals 16, 210, 216–17, 230, 290–93
human sacrifice 292, 337–38, 344
St. Martin's Abbey, Mainz 126
St Maximilian, cell of (Bavaria) 309
Saint-Jean-de-Losne, Council of (673/675) 220
Saint-Pierre-de-Granon, Council of (673/675) 220
saints
See also veneration of Boniface
canonization of Boniface 359, 372
canonization of Sturm 402n100
Leoba, Hrabanus Maurus promoting cult of 387, 398
lives of (*See vitae*)
Netherlands, veneration of Willibrord in 461, 463–64
Salzburg, episcopal see of 306, 319–21, 323, 324, 325
Salzburg Confraternity Book 308, 320n109
Sampson (Irish priest) 319
Saxnot (deity) 224n16, 338
Saxons and Saxony
Boniface attempting to evangelize 285, 303
Charles Martel's military campaign against 17, 40n75, 284–85, 303
conversion by Charlemagne 4
Frankish control, resisting 314
Hessia and Thuringia affected by campaigns against 284–85, 294–95, 296
Hessia and Thuringia invaded by 275, 296
mound burials 290, 291
papal letters of introduction to 18
persistent paganism of 12–13, 14
Schaefer, Ursula 146
Schäftlarn 310–11
Schell, Jakob 415
Scherer, Carl 437
Scherer, Wilhelm 206
Schick, Eduard (bishop of Fulda) 452
Schieffer, Rudolf 1, 9, xvi–xvii
Schieffer, Theodor 140, 149, 206, 452–53
Schierz, Kai Uwe 459n89
Schmerbauch, Moritz 408
Schmid, Ulrich 398n88
Schmitz, Gerhard 208
Schornsheim 71
Schramm, Percy Ernst 140
Schrimpf, Gangolf 193, 393n60
Schüling, Hermann 120
Schurer, Fedde 465
Schwarzach 74
scriptoria run by women in Anglo-Saxon monastic circles 75–77
sea journeys, in classical, patristic, and Old English literature 167
Seiters, Johann Christoph Anton 408
Séjourné, P. 370
Sententiae Bonifatianae Palatinae 204–5, 224, 228, 229
Sententiae Bonifatianae Wirceburgenses 228–32, 233
Sepp, Johann Nepomuk 416
Serarius, Nicolaus 126, 130
Sergius (papal legate) 314, 316–17
Sergius (pope) 51, 133, 348
sermons attributed to Boniface 3, 201–10, 217–18, 233n46
"servant of the servants of God" (*servus servorum Dei*) 135, 257, 261
Servius, *Centimetrum* 110
7000 Oaks (Joseph Beuys) 459
sexual [mis]behaviour
of clerics 212–13, 228, 230, 231, 233, 237, 263
in *Excarpsus Cummeani* 213–15
incest/consanguinity rules 16, 39, 127, 213–14, 233, 238
marital sexual relations 214–15

Sidonius of Passau 317, 320
Siegfried I of Mainz 366
Simoniac heresy 230
Sindpert of Regensburg 307, 320
slaves and slavery 231, 232, 233, 258, 292n124
Slavs 275, 300, 309, 313, 314, 320n107, 325
Smith, Gregory 137, 432n9
social networks. *See* networks
Soissons, Council of (744) 22–23, 235–38, *236*, 242, 243
Sola (recluse and founder of Solhofen) 316, 398, 399
Spain, Arab conquest of 253
St. Bonifatius Gedenkgabe 452
stabilitas, monastic ideal of 105, 237
statue of Boniface (1842) at Fulda 417, 429
Stengel, Edmund Ernst 132, 444
Stephen II (pope) 26, 125, 133, 242, 243n84, 297, 320, 343n46, 347
Stolberg, Joseph Count 414
Stork, Hans-Walter 346n57
Strabo, Walafrid 194n115
Sturm
  Bavarian mission of Boniface and 20, 312–13, 316
  body of Boniface relinquished by Mainz to 362
  Boniface *versus* Sturm, as founder/patron/representative of Fulda 5, 20, 379–82, 385, 387, 390–93, 400–403
  in *Bonifatius - Das Musical* 454
  canonization of 402n100
  commemoration/veneration of 390–93
  Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmi* 171, 174n3, 190, 193, *199*, 361, 379–80, 380n42, 381, 383, 390–93, 395, 401
  exiled by Pippin III 392
  family background and early training 379
  as first abbot of Fulda 20, 61
  Hessia and Thuringia, Boniface in 285, 286, 287
  historical and necrological accounts kept at Fulda and 385, 386–87
  Hrabanus Maurus and 400–401
  Kitzingen, nursed back to health at convent of 79
  Lull, quarrelling with 190
  Monte Cassino and 20, 390
  in Nazi era 441
  "regulations of St. Boniface" and 389–90
Suidger (Bavarian noble) 307, 312–13, 319
Sullivan, Richard E. 166n66
Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 164, 165
supernumerary bishops in Bavaria 305, 308, 310–11
Supplex Libellus 359, 384, 389, 390
Swanahild (second wife of Charles Martel) 302, 313, 314
Sybel-Ficker controversy 413
Synonyms (Isidore of Seville) *80*, 82–83, 195

Tacitus 334, 336, 406
Tætwine (archbishop of Canterbury) 105, 111, 113–14
Talbot, C. H. 131, 150
Tangl, Michael 42n89, 47, 123n4, 124–31, 137, 150, 263n81
Tassilo (duke of Bavaria) 4, 62n86, 311, 319–21, 322, 323–24
Tauberbischofsheim 35, 60, 71, 73–74, 75, 186, 392
te Nuyl, Peter 467
teacher, Boniface as. *See* poet, grammarian, and teacher, Boniface as
Tegernsee 310n55
Terence 103
Thecla (follower of St Paul) 88–89
Thecla of Kitzingen 36n50, 73, 74, 75, 82, 89, 147n129, 186, 285
Theobald (duke of Thuringia) 275n16
Theoderic (Saxon leader) 294–95
Theodo (duke of Bavaria) 18, 222, 301–2, 309, 321, 322
Theodo (son of Tassilo) 323
Theodore of Tarsus (archbishop of Canterbury) 38, 39, 210, 212, 214, 217, 262, 266
Theotbald (associate of Heden) 275n16, 279n44
Theotgar of Herrieden 358–59
St Theresa of Calcutta (Mother Theresa) 426
Thor (deity). *See* Donar
Thornbury, Emily V. 2, 99, 136, 155, xvii
Thuringia. *See* Hessia and Thuringia
Torthelm of Leicester 58, 144

Totnan (missionary) 411
Tours, Battle of (732) 253
treaties
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Association) 425, 451, 466
Paris (1954) 453n61
Rome (1957) 425
Vieux-Poitiers, Treaty of (742) 227
Trier 23, 52, 73, 279, 377, 409, 419, 420
Trithemius, Johannes, *Chronicon Hirsaugiensis* 194n114
Tuinen, Sybren van 432n8, 464n113, 465

universal salvation 204
Urleben 290
Ursus (chaplain of Duke Odilo) 306, 309
Usuard, martyrology of 376
Utrecht
bishopric at 352
body of Boniface at 171, 350–51, 367, 371
Boniface's jurisdiction over 26, 133–34, 227n24, 242–43
Cologne and 347–48, 352
missionary, remembrance of Boniface as 399
modern veneration of Boniface in 431
placed under Boniface's supervision after death of Willibrord 19, 347–51
as settlement 340–42
St. Martin's church, and *Vita altera Bonifatii* 170, 176, 177, 182
veneration of Boniface at 351, 367–72, 378
in *Vita altera* 179, 183–84
Willibrord's Anglo-Saxon mission at 5, 11, 39, 133–34, 327, 331, 340–48
Utrecht baptismal promise/Old Saxon Baptismal Vow 224n16, 338
Uuigo (Bavarian bishop) 303

St Valentinus, translation of body of 322
van Buijtenen, Maria Petrus 463–65
van Egmond, Wolfert S. 183
van Tuinen, Sybren 432n8, 464n113, 465
Velius Longus 102–3
veneration of Boniface
See also Fulda, veneration of Boniface at; Germany, modern veneration of Boniface in; medieval veneration of Boniface; miracle stories; modern veneration of Boniface; Netherlands, modern veneration of Boniface in
canonization of Boniface as saint 359, 372
Dokkum, cult of Boniface at 5, 172, 181, 183, 351
ecclesio-political claims and 365–67
immediate commemoration of Boniface's martyrdom in England 349, 372
in later *vitae* 181–84
relics 351, 357, 359, 362–63, 367, 368–69, 377, 396–98, 461, 470–71
struggle over possession of Boniface's body 171, 187, 188, 350–51, 357, 362–63, 367, 371
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 172–73
Ver, decrees of (755) 235, 243
St Veronica/Beronice 79
Versibus en iuuenis (figured poem; Boniface) 106–9, *107*, 112, 115, 120
Victor of Capua 55
Vienna Codex 122, 125, 128–29, 130, 132, 134, 136, 137, 150–51nn142–143
Vieux-Poitiers, Treaty of (742) 227
Vikings and Viking raids 176
violence, penance for 215
Virgil 103, 104, 149, 178
Virgil of Salzburg 24, 158, 308–10, 316–21, 322, 323, 325
Virgin Mary
increased Marian veneration in modern period 447n49
in woman-produced texts 85–86
virtues and vices, in Boniface's *Enigmata* 116–18, *117*, *118*
Visigothic Spain, collapse of 253
Vision of St. Paul 86
Vita Arnulfi 277, 290
Vita altera Bonifatii 175–84, 185, 192, 195, *196*, 329, 331, 334, 351, 352, 368, 371–72
Vita tertia Bonifatii 175, 184–85, 188, *196*, 352, 368n68, 371–72
Vita quarta Bonifatii 171, 185–87, 190, 191, *197*, 294n145, 362–63, 364
Vita quinta Bonifatii 175, 188, *197*
Vita sexta Bonifatii. *See* Otloh of St Emmeram, *Vita Bonifatii*
Vita Pirminii 188

Vita sancti Bonifacii metrice et prosaice conscripta 193–94, 393n60
Vita Waltgeri 134, 230n32
vitae.
See also later *vitae* of Boniface; Otloh of St Emmeram, *Vita Bonifatii*; Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*
Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 184, 188, 334–37
Altfrid of Münster, *Vita Liudgeri* 61, 176, 183, 184, 333
Arbeo, *Vita Corbiniani* 302n14, 322, 323
Arbeo, *Vita Haimhrammi* 322, 323
Bavarian hagiographical tradition 321–24
of Boniface's disciples 174n3
Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegili* 194
Ecgwine, *vita* of 241
Eigil of Fulda, *Vita Sturmi* 171, 174n3, 190, 193, *199*, 361, 379–80, 380n42, 381, 383, 390–93, 395, 401
Ermanrich of Ellwangen, *Vita Sualonis* 398, 399
Felix's *vita* of Guthlac 81
Gregory the Great, earliest *vita* of 91–92
Hucbald, *Vita Lebwini* 184
Hygeburg of Heidenheim, *Vita Wynnebaldi et Willibaldi* 65, 76, 174n3, 188, *198*, 295, 312, 315n78, 321
Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Columbani et eius socii* 64, 65
Liber Vitae of Salzburg 306, 307, 322
Liudger of Münster, *Vita Gregorii* 52–53, 174n3, 184, *199*, 279n46, 284, 400
Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti* 398, 399n91
networks of 2, 48, 64–66
pseudo-Jonas, *Vita Vulframni* 337–38, 344
Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae* 70, 71, 75, 89, 147n128, 398, 399n91
of St Rupert 323
Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* 164, 165
table of instances of Boniface in medieval saints' lives, 196–99
Wilfrid of York, *Vita* of 333, 343
Vitalis of Salzburg 306
Vivilo of Passau 18, 222, 303, 305–6, 307, 319
Vogel, Christian 458
von Bismarck, Otto 435, 459
von Bunsen, Karl Josias 417
von Ketteler, Wilhelm Emmanuel (bishop of Mainz) 416–17, 435
von Lamazan. Josef 419–20
von Padberg, Lutz E. 47, 138–39, 141, 142n100, 143, 144, 207, 346n57, 428n1
von Ranke, Leopold 437
Vonderau, Josef 287n101, 441
Vulgate 100, 142

Wagenaar, Hinne 469
Wagner, Heinrich 238n61
Walburga [Walpurga] (sister of Willibald and Wynnebald) 29, 57, 74–75, 285
Wallace, Dorothy Patricia 135
Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. 165
Waltrich (Bavarian bishop) 310–11
Watt, Diane 136, 137n75, 147
Wehner, Josef 452
Weichlein, Siegfried 5–6, 404, 434, xvii
Weinrich, Karl 441
Wemple, Suzanne 68, 70
Wenilo of Sens 242n81
Werden 377
Werner, August 436
Werner, Franz 408
Werner, Matthias 282
West Saxon background 1, 27–45
"pioneer" society 33–36
British church 32, 33, 36–39
conversion of Wessex 31–32
family background and connections 28–33, 43–44
limited career prospects in 42–43
missionary impulse and 39–44
North German identity of Boniface and 40
political and ecclesiastical service of Boniface in England 10, 42, 263n79
significance of 27, 44–45
sources for 28
westward expansion of Wessex and 30–31
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* providing information about 27–28, 30

Whitby 52, 91–92
Wicterp (Bavarian bishop) 310
Widerad of Fulda 189
Wieuwerd, hoard of 331
Wigbert (abbot of Fritzlar) 60, 285, 286, 391
  Lupus of Ferrières, *Vita Wigberti* 398, 399n91
Wilareus (Thuringian noble) 276
Wilfrid of York 10, 32–33, 40, 50, 333, 343
Willehad of Bremen 58
William of Malmesbury 33, 138n83, 241
Willibald of Eichstätt (kinsman of Boniface)
  in Bavaria 57, 300, 307, 312–16, 322
  at Eichstätt 20, 65, 187, 223, 312–16
  Heidenheim, founding of 289
  in Hessia and Thuringia 285, 287
  Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebaldi et Willibaldi* 65, 76, 174n3, 188, *198*, 295, 312, 315n78, 321
  at Monte Cassino 19, 41, 57, 58, 312
  ordination as bishop 19
  reform/reform councils and 223, 226
  visiting Rome 29, 43
  in *Vita quarta* 187
  West Saxon family background 29
Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* 3, 152–73, *196*
  audience for 152–53, 166
  on Bavaria 299, 302, 303, 306, 307, 310, 315, 321, 323, 324
  commissioned by Lull and Megingoz 20, 27, 65, 152, 357, 362, 372, 378
  correspondence, access to 153–54
  dating of 152n5
  Divine Office at Fulda utilizing 360–61
  on felling of Donar oak (oak of Jupiter) 15–16, 48, 54, 163–66, 281, 335
  on Frisian mission 346–47
  on heretics Aldebert and Clemens 134
  on Hessia and Thuringia 275n16, 276–77, 280, 281, 282, 287
  identity of author 152, 153, 155
  later *vitae* and 175, 184, 185–86, 188–89, 190, 193
  on life and West Saxon background of Boniface 9, 27–28, 30
  literary influences on 153, 154–55
  manuscripts of 65, 152n4
  on martyrdom of Boniface 162, 166–71, 429
  martyrological entries based on 376
  miracle stories, paucity of 163–64, 172
  on miraculous well at Dokkum 353–54
  on missionary and reforming activities 40–41, 158–63
  modern editions of 130
  networks and 62, 64–66
  Paul, Boniface compared to 156–58, 160, 163, 167, 173, 180
  personality and character of Boniface in 137–41, 175
  poet, grammarian, and teacher, on Boniface as 100–101, 111
  prayer cards drawing imagery from 429, 431
  on preaching of Boniface 203
  on reform/reform councils 158–63, 222
  saint, commemoration of Boniface as 172–73
  on struggle over possession of Boniface's body 171
  style and structure of 154–58, 172, 188, 195
  on "wild tribes of Germania," 12
Willibrord
  Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 184, 188, 334–37
  Charles Martel supporting 255
  death of 179, 180, 347
  Heden of Thuringia and 276n21, 278, 280
  Hessia/Thuringia and 276n21, 278, 279, 280, 281–83
  lack of written text from 346n57
  missionary impulse and 39, 40–41, 50–52
  Netherlands, veneration in 461, 463–64
  networks and 50–52, 61, 63
  Old Saxon Baptismal Vow renouncing specific pagan gods and 224n16
  as *peregrinus* 10
  relationship with Boniface 14, 51–52, 282–83, 301
  Utrecht, Anglo-Saxon mission at 5, 11, 39, 133–34, 327, 331, 340–48
  Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and 159
  women not included in mission of 34
  written sources, lack of 9
Willigis of Mainz 364

Wimbo[u]rne 35, 42n89, 70, 115
Winchcombe 84
Wiss, Caspar Christoph Gottlieb 130n36
Wissembourg 279
Wissig, Otto 421, 440
Witta of Büraburg 19, 223, 226, 227, 285, 286, 287, 314
Wodan (deity) 165, 224n116, 293, 338
Wolbodo, Psalter of 370n83
Wolfhard of Herrieden 376
Wolfram, Herwig 311n58
Wolrad Prinz zu Schaumburg-Lippe 444
Woman under Monasticism (Eckenstein) 68
women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles 1–2, 68–96
  as correspondents of Boniface 147–49
  Enigmata of Boniface and 115–16
  feminist consciousness of 9–97
  friendships with Boniface rooted in his male friendships 56n54
  gendered messages in texts of 84–91, *87*
  liturgical and "clerical" practices of 91–95
  medical practice by early medieval religious women 78–80
  scholarly studies of 68–69
  scriptoria run by 75–77
  specific women and female monastic houses 70–75
  teacher, Boniface's reputation as 111–12
  texts and transmissions 77–84, *80*
  Virgin Mary, cult of 85–86
  West Saxon pioneer society and 34–36
Women Writers of the Middle Ages (Dronke) 136–37
Wood, Ian 160, 162, 176, 267n103, 323
Wormald, Francis 374
written sources for Boniface 1, 2–3, 9
  See also correspondence of Boniface; poet, grammarian, and teacher, Boniface as; preaching and penance; reform and reform councils; saints' lives
Wulfhard (abbot of Exeter) 29
Wulfram of Metz 337–38, 343–44
St Wulstan, *Portiforium* of 374
Würdtwein, Stephan Alexander 126, 130
Würzburg
  books produced for 75–77
  as episcopal see 223, 261, 287, 311
  Heden of Thuringia driven out of 276
  Kilian of Würzburg 160, 278, 411
  networks utilized by Boniface and 54, 63
  veneration of Boniface in 377
  women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles and 72, 73–74, 75–77
Wynbert of Nursling 29–30, 32–33, 42
Wynfrith. *See* Boniface
Wynnebald (abbot of Heidenheim)
  in Bavaria 312, 313, 315–16
  in Hessia and Thuringia 285, 286, 287, 289
  Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebaldi et Willibaldi* 65, 76, 174n3, 188, *198*, 295, 312, 315n78, 321
  kinship with Boniface 29, 41, 43
  missionizing and network of Boniface 57, 65
  women in Anglo-Saxon missionary circles and 75

Yorke, Barbara 1, 27, 47, xvii

Zachary (pope)
  Bavaria and 314, 316–18
  correspondence of Boniface and 126, 127, 131, 132, 137n77, 145n117, 365–66
  Francia and 260–62, 264, 265, 266
  Hessia/Thuringia and 289
  in life of Boniface 21, 23, 24, 25, 119
  penance/penitentials and 215, 216–17
  Pippin III's elevation to kingship and 241–42, 266
  reform/reform councils and 219–20, 227, 232, 234, 238–39, 242, 243
Zellingen 73
Zöllner, Erich 302n15